

GREYHAWK  
ONLINE

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Summer, June 2020

# VERTH JOURNAL

Issue #33  
Vol 3, no.6

BRAND  
NEW  
CONTENT  
FOR THE  
WORLD OF  
GREYHAWK

- 11 new magic items
- 3 dwarven topics
- 3 Gnarley Forest stories
- 1 new class

## Lands of the Dead

Death Knight vs. Lich  
by Gary Holian

## Housecleaning

a 5e D&D adventure  
by John Roy

PROCAN AND PELOR  
STRIKE A BARGAIN

ECOLOGY OF THE OWLBEAR

RISE, FALL, AND REBIRTH OF THE HORNED SOCIETY



# Librarian's Chronicle

Another issue of the *Oerth Journal* has now made it to press!

This issue proved how much the OJ is absolutely a collaborative community project. Much as with any publishing, this issue had difficulties in being made. (That seems to be something I say often!) We had some hurdles with editing deadlines, due to unforeseen time-conflicts. So we had to put out a call to members of the Greyhawk Online Discord server for volunteer editors to help us out.

Immediately that same day, we had 20 people who'd offered to help us complete the editing of the entire issue! What's more, they had it complete in 72 hours, helping us stay on schedule!

Some could only spend an hour or so over the weekend. Others put in more than a dozen hours over 2 or 3 days! It literally more than tripled our number of volunteers. The sheer willingness of fans to help contribute to the magazine and facilitate making it successful is heartening, to say the very least. But, it wasn't about getting their names in the masthead - we even had one editor say they didn't want credit at all.

This perfectly proves the point that this magazine is only able to be published because of the people who support us. We couldn't do it without fans volunteering their time and effort.

For our patrons, this issue is fairly fast on the heels of its predecessor. While the PDFs have come out almost precisely 90 days apart, for the first print issue patrons weren't able to donate and receive their print issues 'til well after the PDF came out. This one is scarcely a five or six weeks after the very last of the issues were delivered. So, this time, we tried to get the release date of the free PDF and the date Patrons received their copy closer to the same date. ... It still isn't going out 'til about 7 to 10 days after the PDF, but, that's much, *much* closer!

Another surprising thing has been quite how fast the OJ is growing now. This, again, is a large issue. Yet, we have more articles coming in than ever and we are able to set one or two aside for the next issue. Article submissions still only come in on an almost per-issue basis, though, so we still need contributors every issue and we are always looking for new people who want to Create and Share for the World of Greyhawk!

One last note: The day this issue was published, two authors stepped up and proved once again how important this community is to producing the OJ. A page had to be pulled at the last minute, but, they came through with little or no prep and turned over short articles that could be fit into the vacated space. A hearty "thank you" goes out to Les Reno and Amy Crittenden for being great contributors and making the community better!

We're all in this together!

So, **"Create and Share, for the WORLD OF GREYHAWK!"**

**'Til the starbreak!**

Kristoph Nolen  
Editor-in-Chief



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# THE OERTH JOURNAL

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# TWOFOLD LANDS OF THE DEAD



## Mysterious Places: Undead Lords vie Against Each Other

By Gary Holian, [Canonfire.com](http://Canonfire.com)

In the eastern lands of the Flanaess there are two realms - both hidden and ancient, and yet not forgotten from the lore of men. These lands are small and can be found on different sides of the Adri Forest, that great and mysterious wood which is home to innumerable secrets. The masters of these lands are as enigmatic as they are different. While both have been dead for centuries, they still exert considerable influence on this plane of existence. Both have access to powerful artifacts, but use them for different purposes. So powerful are their wills, that they have begun to shake loose their lands from the moorings of this world. Have they faded from this world like other lands on Oerth have done, or disappeared into the mists? Not quite yet.

### **The Domain of Myrhal**

Deep in the Adri Forest lies a dark and suffocating web which some dare enter, but few return. In the center of that web sits a spider, an ancient being who hungers endlessly for power, consumed by a craving that can never be sated. This realm is located in one of the most trackless portions of the Adri, where even the woodsmen dare not travel. The expanse is also preternaturally cold like the woods to the northwest. It exists in perpetual gloom, as if the trees themselves cannot bear to part and reveal its crimes to the heavens. This land is called Exumbria, so-named by its baneful lord, Prince Myrhal the Cruel, who founded it over 375 years ago.

Myrhal is the absolute ruler of Exumbria. He is a Death Knight, one of the original thirteen compatriots of Saint Kargoth who fell to darkness in 203 CY. In his youth, he spent considerable time in the Adri Forest with his father, hunting harts, foxes, and some say the very woodsmen who poached on their lands near Dustbridge. As he grew older, Myrhal was recognized as a talented knight of great strength and skill at arms. He was certainly not one to shy away from a fight or walk away from an affair of honor. As with many of his peers, he was a veteran of the wars against the humanoids of the Rakers, as well as campaigns against the barbarians of the north. Like Monduiz Dephaar, his comrade, he was accused of violating the Rules of Parslin by behaving in unchivalrous and cruel ways towards his defeated foes. However, since he was a member of the Royal House of Rax, long before it lost all power during the Turmoil Between Crowns, he escaped the trials and punishment that might otherwise have befallen him.

Prince Myrhal's symbol is the royal orb ringed in teeth. It represents an Aerdi Sun that can never be sated, can never set, and will devour all. His palace is a

necropolis called Vaxhaunt. It is located in the very heart of his accursed lands of Exumbria and was built by an army of undead slaves, laboring day and night, over many decades. Even more remarkably, Vaxhaunt is still being built. Work on it has never stopped, not for a single sunrise, since the day it was started. It has grown into a vast black labyrinthine fortress the size of a city. While it does not soar, Vaxhaunt surely sprawls. The necropolis stretches almost ten miles at its widest point. It has few straight roads, instead visitors must twist and turn through maze-like streets and alleys and the occasional open square in order to reach its center. At the end of a vast plaza of grisly statuary and profane foliage, including a half dozen undead treants, sits the court that contains Myrhal's vast throne.

Who would serve such a villain or live in such a place? Primarily other undead, of course. Prince Myrhal's right hand is an old vampire named Lurgenz, a dissident of the House of Darmen. Lord Lurgenz is wily and has learned over the centuries how to anticipate and manipulate the needs of his master. Little escapes his notice or that of his vast network of spies.



Art By Sam Wood, courtesy of WotC



Lady Lutrella is Prince Myrhal's consort, though in reality her personal duties comprise little more than to be a decoration for his left arm. She is an animus, created to be a lady in waiting in Rauxes, one of Lady Kath's first experiments in artificial undeath. Lutrella appears as a nearly perfect human woman, but on close inspection she is heavily perfumed to hide the stench of rotting flesh that emanates from her orifices. Her main duties are to organize what passes for a court at Vaxhaunt, including the procurement of entertainment.

The third major figure in Exumbria is a mortal named Alfcarus, though to call him a man might be a bit of a stretch. He is a Flan priest of Orcus and a necromancer who has now lived over 200 years. In that time, he has replaced almost every part of his body, some even twice. His appearance is highly disagreeable. Alfcarus is Myrhal's court mage and one of his most trusted advisers.

Every single kind of undead is represented in this necropolis and they are generally divided into three groups forming a sort of caste system, based on their intelligence and appearance. At the lowest rung are the skeletons and zombies that make up the bulk of the inhabitants of the realm. They are the workers who build Vaxhaunt and maintain its armies. The second rung of undead include ghosts, ghouls, skeleton warriors, and others who have intelligence but are regarded as inhuman. They form the core of Prince Myrhal's army and generally patrol Exumbria for intruders when not otherwise tasked. At the top rung are the vampires, swordwraiths, and others who can closely resemble humans or retain their previous memories and faculties. Some are former courtiers of the House of Rax and they are the leaders of Prince Myrhal's armies and the members of his court.

Surprisingly, there are also some humans in Vaxhaunt. Some ambitious blackguards have been drawn to Prince Myrhal's banner, such as the notorious Sir Skannor Varborg. There are evil clerics and mages in the city, conducting research that would be high crimes in any other realm. Most of the rest of the humans are from a tribe of Rhennee known as the Rhel-far. Like the Att-loi, the Rhel-far never took to the waters of the Flanaess. But unlike the Att-loi, their nature is truly marked by greed and malevolence. When the Rhennee were hunted down in the Adri and driven out in 141 CY, the Rhel-far, who were few in number, drifted south and east and hid in the forest. Instead of departing for the west like the vast majority of their cousins. Some fell into service of the wizard-king of Knurl, but most eked out an existence in the Adri, wary of the Coldwood, until the arrival of Prince Myrhal. The coming of the Death Knight and his commanding presence attracted them to his service for he reminded them of the Despots of Rhop. Now they serve him far and wide as spies and agents, often posing as their cousins to escape notice.

## DM's Notes, Rumors and Hooks

Exumbria is some 50 miles wide and 60 miles deep and is located to the southeast of the Coldwood in the Adri Forest. Its full population is unknown, but those who have escaped Vaxhaunt speak of thousands of undead crowding its streets and alleys.

Rumors are correct that Prince Myrhal already possesses the evil Crown of Might, one of three sets of regalia of legendary importance to the Aerdi people. It was formerly in the possession of a lich named Hathamiriz who was vanquished by Prince Myrhal, the first recorded defeat of a lich by a death knight. He will literally agree to anything to obtain the other two artifacts.

The people of Elversford, a town along in the Harp River in the western Adri Forest, host a secret enclave of Knight Protectors of the Great Kingdom. They are aware of Myrhal and his malign presence, especially since the Clash of Bones a century ago. The rangers based there are always spying on his activities, careful not to get too close or to get caught. Their leader is known as Lord Parren Ludern.

The forces of Prince Myrhal are under standing orders to treat captured prisoners according to their station. Those important enough, through claim or appearance, are often brought to Prince Myrhal unharmed so that he might converse with them. Paralysis is an oft employed tool. The fate of the interlopers is rarely in their hands and it is rarely any good.

Rumors suggest that Lady Lutrella has taken a new lover at court. The particulars are too horrifying to contemplate, but it is certain that the news will rile Prince Myrhal and precipitate one of his periodic purges where loyalties are tested and positions at court are upended, making the necropolis particularly vulnerable to a raid or an exploit.

Alfcarus has been attempting for decades to become a lich, but has been unable to achieve the transformation. He believes he might be missing certain spells or ingredients that will power his phylactery. He has sponsored numerous expeditions to the ruins near Trask and the Solnor Coast in order to obtain the knowledge he seeks.

Many of the woodsmen of the Adri have become Undead Hunters, trained by some of the best in the region, including followers of Saint Bane, himself. These Undead Hunters are in great demand and are known to be men and women of great courage. Entire patrols from Exumbria have been destroyed under their aegis.

The Sentinels of the Coldwood, elven stalwarts who protect the ruins of the City of Summer Stars have been at war with Prince Myrhal for centuries. He wants their city, but they refuse to let him have it. The bastard bides his time.



Persistent rumors have reached Prince Myrhal that an Orb of Might might have been discovered on the Isle of Serpents in the Solnor Ocean. Unfortunately, the sphere is acting as the eye of a half-blind ancient green dragon, who might not desire to give it up.

## **The Domain of Seragrimm**

In a concealed valley north of the city of Innspa, in the Flinty foothills, there is a land called Avesta whose borders are often shrouded in fog. Whether this effect is natural or of magical origin is difficult to discern. When this misty line is crossed, a bright sunlit land of abundance and warmth welcomes the traveler. It is forested and dotted with settlements, some barely larger than thorps. These tiny villages are surrounded by bountiful farms and lands cleared for grazing. Following the well-worn road along a fast-flowing river, you come to a walled town encircling a castle. It is an architectural splendor formed of gleaming white stone topped with golden cupolas that shine and entice. This impressive settlement is located about two days' march into the valley. Anyone fortunate enough to visit this place will have discovered Valehurst, the dwelling of a lich known as Seragrimm the Just.

Although far lesser-known, Seragrimm is unlike any lich that has existed in the legends of the Flanaess. He is also the antithesis of the Lord of Vaxhaunt. Where Myrhal is cruel and capricious, Seragrimm is wise and just. His power and magic help to sustain the land, protect its privacy, and offer sanctuary to those who need it. He does not take life wantonly, but values it and sustains it. How did this come to be?

Seragrimm was born in the city of Innspa in the year 37 CY during the reign of the Overking Serran. His true name is now forgotten, but it is thought that his family might have once been a prosperous, if minor, house of ancient Nehron extraction. Following their deaths at the hands of humanoid raiders in the Adri, Seragrimm became a ward of the Lord of Innspa, a Cranden nobleman. He was discovered to have an aptitude for magic and was sent to Rel Deven for training. Seragrimm was schooled in the ways of the Eldritch Lords and eventually became one of their number, perhaps even their greatest. In that role he helped fashion numerous powerful magic items for the Great Kingdom, including some artifacts such as the Sword of Manshen, the Oculus of Rel Astra, and the Chalice of Yalranda. He was often recognized for his courage and goodness in addition to his skill as a mage. Seragrimm was even assigned duties with the archmage Schandor, then far into his dotage, and the two became close friends until the latter's death.

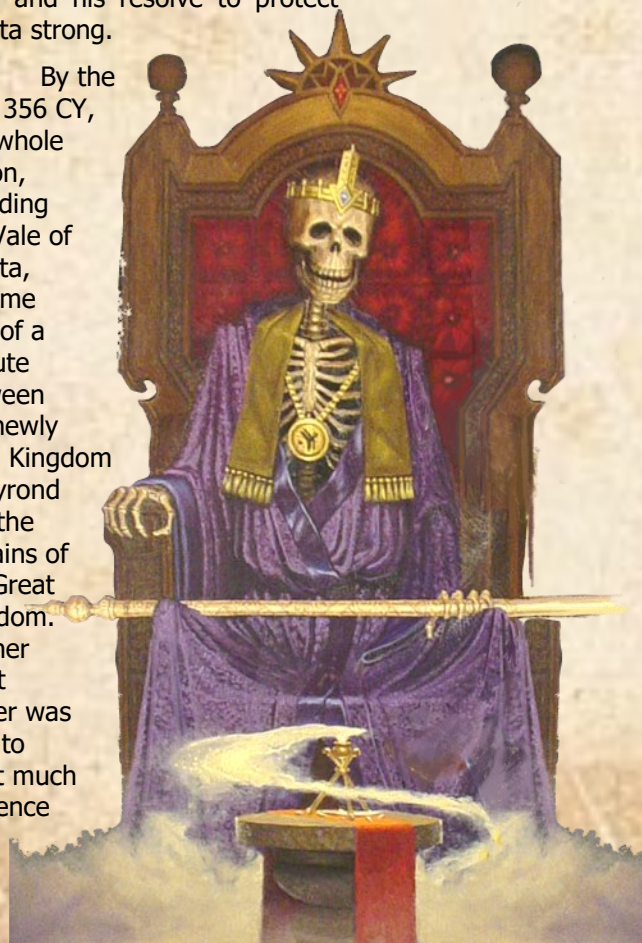
After a stint as an adviser to the Overking, Seragrimm was appointed as the lord protector of the Vale of Avesta in 128 CY by Toran I. This was in recognition of his devoted service to the Malachite Throne, especially for his heroism in the many Bone March and Ratik campaigns. He took possession of a small wooden fort called Valehurst and made it his seat. In 141 CY, he counseled

the Overking Earhart II to have the Rhennee folk expelled from the Adri following their appearance the year before. He studied the customs and practices of these new arrivals up close and judged them as being baleful for the future of the realm, yet still he cautioned mercy through the undertaking.

Seragrimm helped ensorcell the walls of Spinecastle for defense and in his final public act, was there along with many other notables for the dedication of the Fortress-City in 197 CY. The mage lit up the sky during the festivities with an incandescent depiction of Caldni Vir's charge to great wonder and applause. Even Sir Kargoth, hero of the Red Gnoll Clashes, who was in attendance was caught glancing up to the heavens with his mouth agape. Seragrimm then retired back to Avesta and it was assumed that death would soon claim him, for at 160 wintery years old, even mages who have access to extraordinary life-extending magics eventually succumb to Nerull's grasp.

The events of the ensuing decades soon faded Seragrimm from memory, as treachery and warfare, decadence and dissolution, drew the attention of the Great Kingdom elsewhere. The mage took notice of these events and worried for the fate of his countrymen, even as he defended his land from marauders, humanoids, and would-be tyrants, such as the Wizard-King of Knurl, with whom Seragrimm would clash on more than one occasion. The years would pass, but death failed to claim him. Even as his flesh slowly crumbled away, his mind remained clear and his resolve to protect Avesta strong.

By the year 356 CY, this whole region, including the Vale of Avesta, became part of a dispute between the newly sired Kingdom of Nyronid and the remains of the Great Kingdom. Neither great power was able to exert much influence



Art By Keith Parkinson, courtesy of WoTC



here and Avesta slowly became forgotten. From time to time, emissaries from one of the two kingdoms would discover their way to the mouth of this valley. Depending on their disposition, they would either find row upon row of fierce Flinty Gnome pikemen in their path or they might get lost in the fog and return to Innspa unsatisfied. If they were truly lucky or worthy, they might discover the well-worn road to Valehurst.

Should a visitor make it any further into Avesta, he is likely to be presented to Lord Drendar, Castellan of Valehurst, who is the outward face of these lands. At present-day in 592 CY, he is the 17th in his line to bear that name. Drendar is a skilled mage in his own right and as were his fore-fathers, trained by Seragrimm himself. Should the supplicant be found worthy, they will discover that behind Drendar sits old Seragrimm, the long-dead protector of these lands. How does he still maintain existence, over half a millennium since his birth? Even the ancient mage himself is not certain, for he did not seek to become a lich.

His devotion to his duty and his realm was so strong that a path to undeath was opened before him. No doubt this path must have been influenced by the powerful magic with which he has surrounded himself. Many suspect that Seragrimm wears the Crown of Might dedicated to Good, given to him to protect by the Archmage Schandor, himself. It is in his safekeeping for the day when a good and honorable monarch once again sits on the Malachite Throne. In truth, Seragrimm considers it blasphemous to wear the crown and will only do it in extremis, which is usually only if his realm is under great threat. It grants him extensive control over his lands and how they are perceived from the outside. He knows on the day he places it on another's head, there is a chance he will crumble to dust where he stands.

Everyone in Avesta is aware that their prosperity is tied to the existence of Seragrimm and accepts that as a fact. He is slow to act and very thoughtful in his judgment. Despite the atrocities in the outside world, he would not ride out and right all these wrongs. He knows that in acting such a way, he would surely become a tyrant, like any other.

### **DM's Notes, Rumors and Hooks**

Seragrimm is a powerful archmage and in every respect should be treated as a lich for the purposes of encounters. Seragrimm will perform no evil act to sustain himself and should that become necessary would gladly lay down his life. Few in the Flanaess would want to challenge him in single combat anyway. He is protected by a phalanx of swordwraiths who are sworn to him and patrol Avesta day and night. They are known as the Order of Astragalus. Their symbol is a lower leg bone on a dark blue field.

The Vale of Avesta is 30-40 miles wide and some 100 miles deep. The population of the capital, Valehurst,

is approximately 950. It is over 11,000 for the land of Avesta as a whole. Though there are numerous undead in residence here, almost all are good or neutrally aligned. Most are ghosts, but there are swordwraiths, shadows, banshees, vampires, and even an animus. All are sworn to coexist in peace with the living by the Oath of Seragrimm. This is the perfect setting for a Ghostwalk Campaign. Undead hunters are not welcome.

Sir Oslan Knarren, the infamous Death Knight, has visited the land of Avesta and has been offered refuge by its lord in order to discuss a matter of great urgency. The nature of that parley has never been revealed.

Rumors are that Seragrimm knows the location of Schandor's final resting place. Indeed, Seragrimm himself enspelled the powerful seals that have kept it and the wondrous treasures of the greatest archmage in the history of Aerdy safe for centuries. Seragrimm almost never travels, but from time to time, on very rare occasions, has made a journey into the northern mountains. This has led many to speculate that the tomb can be found in the Rakers.

Saint Benedor has sought and has been granted refuge in the vale on many occasions, obscuring his location from his pursuers. The artifact known as the Orb of Sol, has surely spent much time in Avesta as well. And though he has not been seen in more than a century, Benedor's cult is strong among the mortal folk of the vale and they have built a chapel in his honor in Valehurst. It contains a statue of the blind god and tomes dedicated to his life and the nature of the Orb.

Rhennee spies, from many of their factions, have been attempting to find the vale for centuries. Whether that is to avenge themselves on its lord or plunder its valuable treasures is not known. But there are those who fan out from Innspa in search of it from time to time.

Prince Myrhal reviles Seragrimm, but is also secretly jealous of his ties to the glorious past of the Aerdi. The Prince suspects that Seragrimm knows the location of all the Regalia of Might. The two came to blows when the Death Knight marched a small army of undead through the Adri to a point north of Innspa to assail the valley more than a century ago. In order to hide its exact location, Seragrimm and a force from Avesta rode out to meet him in a field east of the Harp River in a battle known as the Clash of Bones.

Saint Bane will not set foot in the land of Avesta, though he knows of its existence. While he has been told of the beneficence of its undead residents, he cannot abide their nature, for in his eyes, both they and their lord are abominations.

*Author Gary Holian, who often goes by the name "Pluffet Smedger" online, was also the author behind two articles focusing on the "Death Knights of Oerth", in Dragon magazines 290 & 291. He is co-wrote the Living Greyhawk Gazetteer and maintains Canonfire.com—the oldest World of Greyhawk fansite online.*

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# LORE OF THE USK TREE

## A Variety of Uses and Magic from Botany

By Lance Hawvermale — [lancehawvermale.com](http://lancehawvermale.com)

From the unpublished *Trees of the Flanaess*  
by Canaldryn the Spry, sage of dendrology.

Hookhill, Gran March

Goodmonth 27th, 569 CY

In the summer of last year, I joined an expedition funded by a deposed marquis from Sterich, one Anklyn Darv III. He was intent on claiming a valuable mine in the Jotens and using its supposed riches to fund his return to his nation's dubious aristocracy. Given the turmoil in Sterich's history and Anklyn's erratic disposition, I had my doubts about his ability to realize this grand dream, but his cohort provided the passage I needed to conduct my research in relative safety and peace. After several days of uncomfortable climbing in the Jotens, and one narrow escape from a pair of hill giants on the hunt, we reached a valley with pine trees as straight as spears. My interest in pines is well documented, but I had come for another tree entirely.

Usk trees are a hidden treasure. Those of us who depend on merchant shops and trading posts to provide for our everyday needs have little understanding of the rich bounty that can be provided by a plant such as the noble usk. The importance of usk trees to life in the Jotens cannot be overstated. As a single species of hardwood tree, the usk provides a remarkable number of resources:

**Leaves:** Usk leaves are often described as "tough" and "flexible" by the generations of primitive builders they have served. About six inches long and half as wide, these leaves, if cured correctly, behave much like very thin leather enabling them to be stitched together to fashion hut roofs, clothing, and — in the case of the isolationist Uski tribesmen — the pocket of their deadly slings. Usk leaves can be sewn in layers to function as leather armor (AC 8), though the leaves succumb to wear and tear after 3d6 days and must be replaced. The leaves can also be woven into stout, if impermanent, ropes. If more than 300 pounds of strain is applied to an usk rope there is a 25% chance that it snaps.

**Roots:** Given the proper equipment, an alchemist can transform usk roots into a rich blue ink suitable for writing on most common paper types. In the wrong hands, usk root can be brewed into a dangerous substance. When combined with certain ingredients, which shall not be recorded here, a trained herbalist can produce a small quantity of toxin (Type C).

**Bark:** Usk bark is sometimes ground into a powder and consumed as tea, though its flavor can be bitter without sweetener, preferably honey. A skilled healer can use the



bark to produce a poultice which stems bleeding and heals 2 points of damage to any open wound.

**Wood:** An usk tree grows to 60 feet in height. Its wood is dense and not particularly flexible. Though not suitable for the making of bows or animal traps, usk wood can be used when a certain elasticity is required, such as building redoubtable walls. Although it is not as strong as oak, its structure is such that it absorbs impacts by efficiently displacing the force of a blow across its surface. Any item built of usk receives a +1 bonus on saving throws against crushing blows.

**Fruit:** The fruit of an usk tree, uskfruit, is renowned for its sweet flavor. When ripe, this large, three-lobed fruit is bright blue; unmistakable at a glance. It is a common sight at markets in the Yeomanry where it is prized for its taste, especially when baked into pies and tarts. Magic-users with sufficient experience may use uskfruit to distill a *potion of sweet water*.



Art by Kristoph Nolen



## USK MAGIC ITEMS

Over the last year, my apprentices and I have researched and crafted several unique magic items, primarily using ingredients harvested from usk trees.

### ***Sinking Shield***

This wooden medium *shield* +1 is adorned with a stylized image of roots reaching into the ground. Once per day, upon command, the owner may cause thick, resilient usk roots to grow from their lower legs and feet. These roots drive into the ground (earth, sand, or unworked/natural rock) granting the owner the benefit of complete immovability for a number of rounds equal to their experience level. No force less than that of a demi-god may cause the shield's owner to be displaced from that rooted spot. Further, anyone holding on to the owner at this time may defy high winds or other forces as if they were clinging to a full-sized usk tree. The owner may not end the effect willingly until the allotted time has passed. Additionally, once per week, the owner of the *sinking shield* may use these roots to draw water from the ground. They may supply themselves with a "drink" substantial enough to sustain them for 24 hours.

### ***Orchard Club***

Tapping this *club* +2 upon any non-magical tree causes one plump blue uskfruit to drop from the tree's upper limbs.

The *orchard club* can be used on any healthy deciduous tree up to 1d4 times per day.

### ***Siege Sling***

The pocket of this *sling* +2 is made from an usk leaf and empowered such that when a roll of a natural 20 occurs, the hurled stone enlarges in mid-flight into a boulder and strikes with the force of a rock thrown by a cloud giant (1d10+11 points of damage).

### ***Potion of Dendrarmor***

Consuming this elixir causes usk bark to cover the imbiber's body providing AC 4, but penalizing Dexterity checks by -2.

Additionally, the user takes only half

damage from bludgeoning weapons, but double damage from fire. The effects last for 1d4+1 turns. Due to a quirk of its magical properties, a *potion of dendrarmor* must be stored in a wooden flask within a few minutes of its creation.

### ***Woad of War***

This striking blue face paint is made from uskfruit and infused with magic such that, after being applied to the cheeks and forehead, it enables the user to enter a berserker rage, regardless of their character class. A berserk character is immune to enchantment/charm spells,

enjoys a +4 bonus on to-hit rolls and saving throws, and causes an additional 1d6 points of damage per strike. The effects persist for one full turn or until there are no enemies in sight. A jar of *woad* usually contains an amount sufficient for 1d4+1 applications.

## FUTURE USK ENCOUNTERS

Thanks to the hefty wagons and heftier draft horses supplied by the former marquis Anklyn Darv III, I was able to harvest several usk specimens for examination at a field laboratory in Mittleberg. I am determined to publish my illustrations of the tree's amazing heartwood and leaf structure for the benefit of all. I donated a sizable usk trunk to a local woodcarver and look forward to the sculpture she produces. It is my dream that a longer distance lucrative uskfruit trade can soon be established, perhaps providing me with the funds I need to continue my worldwide exploration of the mighty trees of Oerth.

Art by Kristoph Nolen



# DRAGONS OF THE LORTMILS



## The End of Zaddridur

By Thomas Kelly — [GreyhawkStories.com](http://GreyhawkStories.com)

In addition to the goblinkin, older beings called the Lortmil Mountains home. As the dwarves of Gilmorack expanded their efforts beneath Oerth, they disturbed the lair of the great red dragon known as Zaddridur.

For the most part, the Lortmil Mountains are free of dragons except for the territorial bronze dragons who conceal themselves in secret layers beneath the clear, cold waters of snowmelt lakes, deep in the roots of the mountains. Bronze dragons fight to defend their territory from evil dragons, and for that reason, other dragons are rare in the mountains. The bronze prefer dwarves to goblins, and have sometimes assisted the dwarven cause. Be that as it may, none of the bronze wyrms of the Lortmil Mountains ever dared disturb the slumber of Zaddridur who slept upon a respectable pile of wealth and ancient artifacts from the time of the cataclysms, much of it plundered from the lost and forgotten Flan kingdom of Haradaragh.

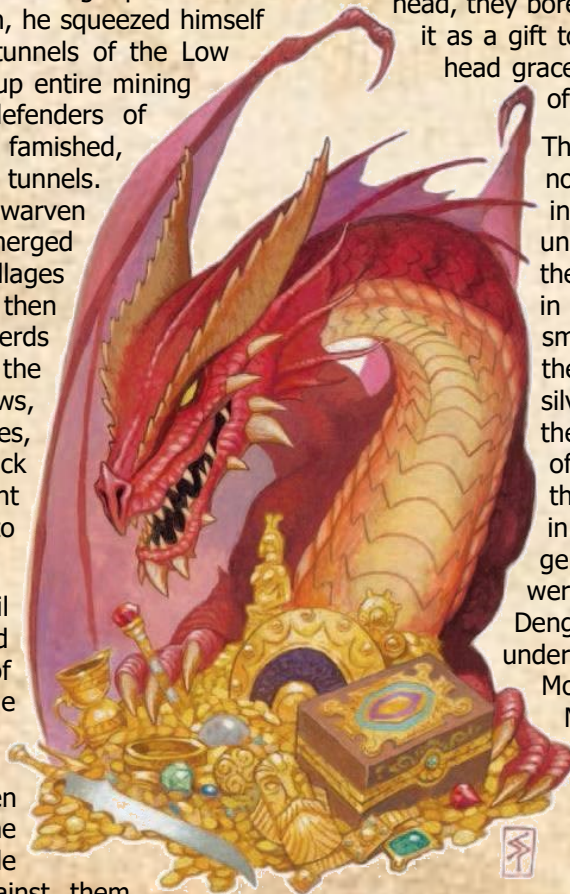
Then came the dwarves of Gilmorack, hammering away with pick and chisel, until the noise of their business disturbed the long sleep of old Zaddridur (307 CY). Waking from a nap many centuries-long, Zaddridur left his chambers famished for flesh. Coming up from the depths beneath ancient Haradaragh, he squeezed himself through the narrow caverns and tunnels of the Low Road. Along the way, he gobbled up entire mining parties whole, as well as the defenders of Gilmorack's guard posts. Still famished, Zaddridur sniffed at the air of the tunnels. Catching the fresh scent of the dwarven settlement of nearby Dengar, he emerged above the vale, incinerated the villages and homes of the surface, and then feasted himself upon terrified herds and flocks running wild in the pastures. With a belly full of cows, goats, swine, gnomes, and dwarves, he lethargically dragged himself back to his lair beneath ancient Haradaragh, making no effort to conceal his whereabouts.

The dwarves of the Lortmil Mountains were not to be trifled with in such a manner. Evrast IV of Clan Oimaeglin called upon the undermountain king of Gilmorack to join him in the vendetta. The combined forces of two dwarven armies stormed the lair of the dragon from every possible entrance. The dragon raged against them,

blasting flames, incinerating flesh, and melting armor, but still the dwarves came, striking blow after blow. The dragon fled before their fury, abandoning his ancient lair and launching himself into the air like a comet. Perhaps to save his dignity or perhaps just to vent his wrath, Zaddridur turned his flaming fury upon the undefended villages, towns, and cities of the Duchy of Ulek. As he flew over the Duchy's territory, he set to blaze farm, town, village, hamlet, and city. The noble city of Waybury was almost completely reduced to ashes. Duke Adanlyr Araglhel of Ulek asked the undermountain kings to compensate for the damages. He requested, at the very least, a tithe from the treasure hoard that Zaddridur had left behind when he fled the mountains. The mountain dwarves offered no reply to the entreaty.

Zaddridur curled himself up in a new lair in the Barrier Peaks and went back to sleep, dreaming about a day of fiery vengeance. Those dreams went unfulfilled. In the year 313 CY, Duke Adanlyr Araglhel of Ulek commissioned an expedition of heroes from the Duchy of Ulek to settle the score. They set out for the Barrier Peaks, hunted down the dragon, and slew Zaddridur in his recently-acquired lair. Severing the great dragon's head, they bore it back to Waybury and presented it as a gift to the priests of Kord. The dragon's head graces the Hall of Heroes in the temple of Kord in Waybury to this very day.

The treasure hoard of Zaddridur was not vast, but every coin and gem was infected with dragon-lust. The undermountain kings quarreled over the wealth, and the magical artifacts in particular. They waged a series of small engagements for possession of the hoard; dwarven blood stained the silver and the gold. A truce between the nations resolved the conflict. Most of the wealth of the dragon's hoard they donated to the temple of Ulaa in Gilmorack. The most remarkable gemstones and precious artifacts were placed into a hall of trophies in Dengar as "a heritage for all the clans" under the supervision of the priests of Moradin. Ultimately, the priests of Moradin proved to be poor curators of the treasure. In Kristryd's day, most of that wealth was carried away by Urgush the half-orc.



Art by Steve Prescott, courtesy WoTC



# DWUR KINGDOMS OF THE LORTMILS



## History, Development, and Locations of Dwarven Strongholds

By Thomas Kelly — [GreyhawkStories.com](http://GreyhawkStories.com)

"Blessed of Ulaa; bequeathed of Berronar!" the old song goes.

The Lortmils are a low chain of mountains that cover an area of some 60,000 square miles, extending from Veluna in the north to Ulek and the border of the Pomarj in the south. At some points, the mountains might be better described as ambitious hills, while at other points they rise precipitously into majestic peaks, the tallest of which to the north boast snow-capped peaks through the warm summer months. Those white-topped northern peaks separate the lands of Gran March from Veluna before tapering off into the lower elevations of the Lorridges on the border of Bissel.

Overland travel through the mountains is confined to a few major passes and a series of well-trodden trails that twist along the ridges. Travel proves easiest on the east side of the range near the Kron Hills, where misty forests of mighty roanwood trees climb the slopes from the Celene highlands. Undergrowth beneath their shady boughs is sparse, and the trunks of the enormous trees are widely spaced, making for easy movement. Only at the higher elevations do the roanwoods give way to poplars and firs.

The southern Lortmils, which dip into Ulek and the Suss, enjoy the moist and subtropical climate of both the Azure and Gearnat Seas, which compete to produce violent tropical storms. The slopes descending into the Principality of Ulek are cloaked in stands of maple, beech, and yew, while the upper elevations are a tangle of scrub pine. In the late weeks of the month of Harvester, the slopes blaze with autumnal colors. Travelers foolish enough to leave the regular paths or stray far from the passes will find their progress through the mountains hampered by heavy underbrush and limited visibility. Even a wood elf could lose his sense of direction in the thick tangles and steep climbs.

The dwarves of Ulek ordinarily travel beneath the mountains. A network of underground dwarven cities and mines, connecting with natural caverns, snakes throughout the whole Lortmil range. The reclusive dwarven denizens of those depths continually tunnel away in pursuit of valuable ores coursing through the bones of the ancient mountains. These ores include remarkably striated granite, and veins of silver and gold. Most precious of all are the rare Lortmil gemstones, which surpass all others for size, clarity, and beauty. For love of the gemstones the dwarves never cease to delve, contesting with their gnomish cousins in pursuit of Ulaa's treasures.

Legends speak of a time when the dwarven

kingdoms of the Lortmil Mountains controlled all the lands to the west as far as the Javan river. Whether or not the dwarves ever held such sway is oft debated, including by the loremasters of Keoland, who scoff at the notion. Storytellers have been known to embellish legends about secret kingdoms of the Lortmil-Dwur and their gnomish cousins, claiming that their chieftains lived like greedy dragons upon their hoards. Some of the stories are true, though the wealth of the mountain lords may be greatly exaggerated. Rocks, stones, and metals are only worth what the market will bear. In the Lortmil Mountains, gems and precious metals are so abundant as to make them of lesser value than in other lands. Even now, the Lortmil-Dwur chieftains, thanes, and their so-called "undermountain kings" are rumored to be as rich as any surface prince. It is well known that both Furyondy and Nyronde have become debtors to their usurious loans.

The Hegoldem-Dwur hill dwarves first arrived at the feet of the Lortmil Mountains over a millennium ago, before the Great Migrations (-424 CY), finding the mountains already occupied. Tribes of orcs and goblinkind already held the mountains and nested in their depths. Hobgoblins trafficked the mountain passes, coming and going from their sacred valley.

Dwarven refugees from the fall of Holgereth established themselves in the southern foothills, near the Azure Coast (the modern Principality of Ulek). These new settlements sent the first dwarves to explore the Lortmil Mountains. Dodging both goblins and giants as they conducted expeditions below the surface to taste the stones, chiseling core samples from the depths of the quiet rock. The hills and mountains obligingly welcomed their efforts, opening their secret places, and generously lavishing wealth upon them. Here were not just ores, but gemstones of a size which had not been found elsewhere on Oerth. The dwarves sacrificed to Berronar in thanks, for they believed that she had bequeathed the mountains to them as an everlasting possession.

### The Fortress Hoch Dunglorin

If so, Berronar offered her children precious little help in the undertaking. The dwarves made valiant attempts to establish themselves in the mountains. They peppered the Lortmil peaks, hills, valleys, and depths with strongholds, guard towers, citadels, keeps, and underground forts. Almost without exception, those halls became tombs for the dwarves who defended them, overrun by kobolds, goblins, orcs, hobgoblins, and gnolls. The denizens of the mountains quickly learned the quality of dwarven construction, and they fought wars among



themselves for possession of forts and outposts even before the dwarves had completed them.

One notable exception was the fortress of Hoch Dunglorin (*Yduin*), a stronghold atop a steep hill, situated near the head of the Kewl River. It is the oldest continually occupied dwarven fortress in the Lortmil Mountains. Thane Olbryn Hammerhowl established the fortress to control a strategic canyon-way that cuts through the mountains, connecting the Shedolamer Valley with the east side of the Lortmils - the Pass of Ulek (also called the Celene Pass).

Prior to Hoch Dunglorin, the feet of goblinkind stomped up and down the Ulek Pass. The hobgoblins used it as a main thoroughfare when journeying from or to their holy city of Grot-Ugrat. The monsters walked that path openly, in numbers small or large, by day or night, as if they had nothing at all to fear. Thane Olbryn Hammerhowl realized that if the dwur should ever hope to establish a permanent presence in the mountains, they needed to control that passage. He built the fort of heavy granite stones, quarried from the living rock, and raised high walls and battlements which stand atop that steep hill to this day.

The hobgoblins fought hard to dislodge the dwur from that fort. They assembled an alliance of orc and goblin tribes and made valiant attempts to overrun Hoch Dunglorin, but Thane Olbryn Hammerhowl and his heroic warriors staved off siege after siege. It must be mentioned that they did not always stand alone. They found help from the lowland elves of Ulek. Thane Olbryn forged an alliance with those high elves, one of the first alliances of dwarves and elves in recorded history. Their pact was one of necessity, for a united stand was required to resist both the threat of the Lortmil tribes and the threat of the lowland kingdoms of men (-288 CY). This first of the Lortmil alliances, now the longest-enduring, was ultimately the decisive one. In later centuries, when borders came to be defined, the stronghold fell within the territory of the Duchy of Ulek and under the authority of the high elf lord, the Duke of Ulek, but he did not greatly impose his governance upon his stout allies, the proud Hammerhowl dwarves. The fortress itself remained under the control of that dynasty, and they profited richly from the trade that passed through their gates.

## The Kingdom of Balnorhak

It took several centuries for the dwarves to establish a stable kingdom of their own in the contested peaks. The great kingdom of Balnorhak began with a single fortress of the same name, built of hewn halls beneath the low peaks north of the current Principality of Ulek (-211 CY). The Kingdom of

Balnorhak spread out from that settlement of the Lortmil mountain dwarves. The first undermountain king of Balnorhak dedicated the city to Ulaa, Berronar, Dunathoin, and Moradin. Summoning Toherntik-Dwur kinsmen, he raised a formidable army to stand against the orcs that descended from the eastern slopes of the Lortmils and the marauding bands of trolls and hill giants who came up from the lowlands to assail the fortress. In addition to these challenges coming from surface dwellers, the first undermountain king found war beneath the earth when the tunnels and shafts of Balnorhak opened into ancient, natural caverns where tribes of goblinkind made their nests. Then began the wars of iron, stone, and steel. Hard-pressed from above and below, the undermountain king invoked the gods, pleading for their help against his foes.

The high priestess of Moradin gave heed to the call. She fasted for the twenty-eight days of Fireseek, invoking the power of Moradin, beseeching him for a gift with which to smite Balnorhak's enemies. On the twenty-eighth day, Moradin appeared to her in a dream and gave her the design for a great anvil on which to strike steel made red in the forge of the gods. The finest craftsmen of Balnorhak gathered in the shrine of Moradin to craft the item according to the pattern revealed in the dream: the legendary Anvil of the Lortmil Mountains. This largest of all the dwarven high anvils was forged from alloys of adamantine and steel and adorned with elaborately carved depictions of Moradin and Berronar laboring at soul forge from which the soul of every dwarf is drawn and hammered into shape.

Any weapon fashioned upon that anvil yielded twice the strength and keenness of edge as might be obtained otherwise. The dwarves of Balnorhak forged legendary enchanted blades which they wielded against their foes in the Lortmil Mountains. Moreover, nations far and wide coveted the weapons forged in the fires of Balnorhak and beaten upon that high anvil.



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## The Kingdom of Gilmorack

A decade after the establishment of Balnorhak, another clan from Holgereth arrived on the far northern end of the



range and sank shafts beneath the towering peak of Abharclamh. In that place, guided by a vision from Berronar, they carved the vast hidden hall of Gilmorack (-201 CY). Gilmorack rivaled any other hall of the Crystallmist clans both in splendor and wealth, but it never knew peace.

The goblinkind who dwelt in the dens and deep holes beneath the northern peaks made fierce war against the newcomers, stormed their fortresses, and raided their supplies. The orcish shamans believed that the mountains had been bequeathed to them as their inheritance from the One-Eyed god Gruumsh, who had received it as his allotment after being tricked out of his rightful share of Oerth. The orcs considered the arrival of the dwarves to be a test from Gruumsh, one that could be passed only by expelling the interlopers. They came in waves, swarming up from the deep places. The halls beneath the mountain rang with the shouts of battle, the clash of arms, and the screams of orcish voices. Many are the songs still chanted among the mountain dwarves to recall the valorous and heroic deeds of those underground battles. In those days, the undermountain king of Gilmorack made a solemn covenant with the undermountain king of Balnorhak, and the latter sealed the covenant with a princely gift. He presented to the northern king a mighty hammer with which to smite their foes. Enchantments were laid upon the hammer such that when it left a warrior's hand to strike their enemies, it returned on its own accord to the warrior's grasping hand. Many heroic tales are told of the first undermountain king of Gilmorack and his marvelous hammer. Alas that the hammer has been lost, and none know what hand grasps it now.

During the reign of the first undermountain king of Gilmorack, a bitterly cold winter brought heavy snows to Mount Abharclamh, burying the roads beneath an avalanche and isolating the kingdom so none might pass. There had never been a winter like it neither before nor since. Hungry orcs raided the granaries, burning what stores they could not carry away. The isolated dwarves of Gilmorack faced the grim prospect of starvation. The only path to survival led through the lower caverns and out to the lowlands where they might replenish their stores. Under threat of extermination, the first undermountain king led a company of one hundred heroes to break the blockade, bludgeon through the lower tunnels, and escape into the lowlands (now possessed by the Archclericy of Veluna). But that great feat of heroism was not yet half the battle. For upon their return, the undermountain king and his men carried upon their stooped backs great sacks of grain, each dwarf bearing more than would have been reasonable to expect of a donkey. Even thus encumbered, the dwarves fought their way back up through lower caverns until they came again to their hidden kingdom. This great deed is still sung of in the chants of Gilmorack.

## Treaty of Grot-Ugrat

Valorous deeds and heroic battles could not suffice to preserve the two dwarven kingdoms. Clinging precariously to their two handholds in the mountain range, the Lortmil dwarves faltered and nearly fell to the relentless attacks of goblinkind. With their strength and their resources committed to defending their halls, the undermountain kings had few resources left for expanding their mines or extracting more wealth. What they did extract from the earth they found difficult to bring to market without control of the mountain passes. "We are rich in gemstones such as the world has never seen," the thane of Gilmorack said, "But our children cannot eat gemstones nor mill flour from gold." Pushed to the breaking point, the dwarves attempted a truce with the goblinkind.

Against the popular consensus of his people, the thane of Balnorhak initiated the attempt at peace. He sent an appeal to the hobgoblin priests of Grot-Ugrat, the ancient city of the hobgoblins set low in a mountain valley. Now it must be told that the hobgoblins of the Flanaess regard Grot-Ugrat as a holy city, sacred to their god Nomog-Geaya. Moreover, the city and all the vale about it was once revered by all goblinkind, and many temples to their unholy deities stood therein. Hobgoblins from all of eastern Oerth considered pilgrimage to Grot-Ugrat a sacred duty incumbent upon each one of them, at least once in their lifetimes. Maglubiyet and Gruumsh also kept rival temples and shrines in the holy city where they competed to slurp up the blood of sacrifices. Their worship regularly inspires bloodshed among competing shamans and rival priesthoods, but not within the sacred valley. The priests that ruled Grot-Ugrat upheld an ancient prohibition on bloodshed within the boundaries of the sacred valley, and even dwarves were allowed to visit the city unmolested. All those who came and went from Grot-Ugrat respected the ancient tradition and feared the consequences should they violate the sanctity of that sacred valley.

Once the two sides agreed to meet and parley, they did so not in the hobgoblin city, but outside the battlements of the dwarven fortress of Hoch Dunglorin. Under the mediation of the clerics of Nomog-Geaya, the mountain dwarves struck a covenant-treaty with representatives of all the various goblinkind tribes. For their part, the goblinkind chieftains agreed to honor the newcomer's claims, leaving their tunnels open, and refraining from raiding within the borders of the dwarven kingdoms. More than that, they swore on the names of their gods to let dwarven caravans move through the overland passes without fear of ambush. In return for these bounties, the dwarves agreed to honor the boundaries of the various tribes and to cease hunting them in the lower tunnels. They also promised a tithe of the gold, silver, and precious gems they obtained from the mines which would be delivered to the priests of Grot-Ugrat who swore to distribute the wealth among the rest of the goblinoid tribes. Such concessions had never been



offered by any dwur-folk aforetime, nor has such a thing happened since.

All the treaty members swore in the names of their respective gods, and they sacrificed cattle, sheep, and goats to seal the covenant in blood. A celebration ensued. Drums pounded through the night and echoed off the canyon walls. For the first time and the last time in the history of Oerth, dwarves, goblins, orcs, hobgoblins, and ogres shared a covenant meal.

The treaty, however, was doomed from the outset. Even if the goblinkind chieftains intended to honor their commitments, they did not possess the power of which they boasted. They had little control over the independent clans and petty warlords which constituted their tribes, much less the shamans who held the real power. Raids and incursions into dwarvish territory continued unabated. Enraged dwarves accused the priests of Grot-Ugrat of swindling tribute from them while doing nothing to control the tribes. Both sides resumed the status-quo of violence and hatred, and the name Grot-Ugrat became a curse and an obscenity among the dwarves.

Goblinkind tells a different version of the story. They say that the dwarves took advantage of the goodwill of Grot-Ugrat, broke the treaty, betrayed the gods, and stole their land.

## Between the Hammer and the Anvil

Goblinkind held the upper hand over the Lortmil dwarves through sheer strength of numbers. Had they ever united under a common leader, instead of ceaselessly warring among themselves, they would have easily driven the dwarves from the mountains and taken possession of all their finely-crafted stone halls. While the numerous tribes of kobolds, goblins, orcs, and hobgoblins happily made war on one another, largely ignoring the presence of the bearded folk, the dwarves continued to patiently chisel away beneath the stone, intent on achieving manifest destiny.

The tipping point came when the tunnels of Balnorhak reached the tunnels of Gilmorack. Two teams of excavators, working continuously for more than two centuries, met in the center when pick-axe struck pick-axe, opening a continuous road between the two kingdoms. The so-called "Low Road" employed a network of intersecting tunnels, natural caverns, carved chambers, and snaking watercourses to connect the kingdoms of Balnorhak and Gilmorack. The thoroughfare granted the dwarves a tactical and strategic advantage in their ongoing struggle for control under the mountains. The goblinkind found themselves trapped between the two kingdoms, or, as dwarven poets expressed it, "between the hammer and the anvil."

## Rockhome

The controversial treaty of Grot-Ugrat damaged the credibility and authority of the undermountain king of Balnorhak. A strong contender for his throne, Sire Evrast of the Oimaeglin clan, rose up against the undermountain king. With the blessing of the new high priest of Moradin, Sire Evrast condemned the old king for his part in the failed treaty and publicly denounced him for his foolishness. His rhetoric took advantage of popular sentiment, for the undermountain king's negotiations with goblins scandalized all the clans. Moreover, Sire Evrast had the awe-inspiring assistance of a powerful golem he called Rockborn. This creature was magically fashioned of granite in the likeness of a great dwarf, and it commanded god-like awe and fear. Indeed, Sire Evrast claimed that the golem had been given to his clan as a gift from Moradin and that the voice of Moradin spoke through the golem. None dared challenge him or his golem, and even the thane of Balnorhak feared Evrast and his monster.

Sire Evrast might have unseated the old undermountain king and taken Balnorhak for himself, but he had higher ambitions. Rather than seize the throne of what he considered to be a fading kingdom, Evrast desired to chisel his own kingdom from solid rock and richer veins. Sire Evrast agreed to leave Balnorhak peaceably, but he invited all those "who would not bandy with goblins" to follow after him and his golem. "We will cut our own kingdom from the stone, and we will take for ourselves the everlasting possession the gods have promised us."

Evrast led a great exodus from Balnorhak, including many renowned heroes, the sacred priests of Moradin, and the entirety of the Oimaeglin clan. Despite the helpless protests of the undermountain king, the defectors also took with them the Anvil of Lortmil Mountains. The stone golem carried the heavy anvil in his arms at the head of their northbound procession. Prominent families of Balnorhak took this as a definitive sign of the gods' favor upon Sire Evrast and his divine golem, and forsaking their ancient halls they elected to follow him. In the space of a few days, half the kingdom of Balnorhak abandoned the old undermountain king.

Sire Evrast and his followers traveled north through the Low Road, but they turned aside before reaching Gilmorack. Digging new tunnels to the surface from the Low Road, the high priest of Moradin led them into a broad valley of mountain lakes and high cliff walls. "Beneath these stones," he piously declared, "is the place our kind first were formed. Beneath these stones, Moradin first gave shape to Durin, and Durin begat his seven sons." Whether his claims have any validity is left to the dwarven people to argue and sort through their own theology. Although dwarves from outside the Lortmil Mountains still scoff at the notion, for those dwelling in the mountains, that new doctrine transformed all those hills and snow-covered peaks into a holy shrine, sacred to all dwarvenkind.



The golem set the anvil upon a firm rock in the sacred valley, and they raised the citadel of Dengar (also known as Rockhome) round about it. Then, they turned their attention to the denizens of the valley. They flushed the goblinkind out from the networks of caves set in the cliff face, and they burned the hobgoblin villages that stood beside the lakes.

## Fortress of Dorob Kilthduum

Not to be left out of trade with the northlands or isolated from the gnomes, the undermountain king of Balnorhak established a colony of dwarves in the Kron Hills. He spent lavishly from his personal treasuries to raise a great and imposing fortress called Dorob Kilthduum at the headwaters of the Clearwater River. He stocked the fort with worthy dwarves who could defend its walls and facilitate trade with the gnomes. The fort sits at a crossroads beneath the cliffs of the Kron Hills. From the security of their fortress, the Balnorhak dwarves guarded the flow of trade over the roads and, at the same time, reminded the gnomes of the strength of their dwur cousins.

There was in that place a certain young dwarf girl, barely weaned from her mother's milk, to whom, it is said, the goddess Berronar appeared. This girl was named Gilvgola, and she found favor in the eyes of the gods and the eyes of the dwurfolk. Gilvgola grew to be a wisdom-healer among the dwarves and a high priestess of Berronar, goddess of hearth and home and Moradin's bride. In her young years of adventuring, Gilvgola explored the Low Road and all the caverns beneath, ever looking deeper and further for the roots of the mountains. She wandered far below the chambers where even goblinkind dared to tread, and there she found a vast underground lake, the lair of a wise bronze dragon. It is said that the dragon shared his wisdom and blessed her. She returned then to her people in Dorob Kilthduum and rose to prominence among all the priests of dwarves.

When the powerful orc shaman, Dregrak the Cruel arose, he commanded powerful devilshine. Goblinkind united behind him and made war against the dwarves and gnomes, trying to force them from their delvings. The

undermountain kings turned to Gilvgola for help. Armed only with prayer and faith, the young priestess led a party of heroes to Dregrak's lair, slew him, and drove away his fiends. From then on, Gilvgola continuously traveled between Gilmorack, Dengar and Balnorhak to speak the wisdom and the prophecies of Berronar. She became beloved among all the dwarves of the mountains. When she arrived, the people brought her the sick, the lame, the injured, and she healed them. Even men from the lowland villages sought her out for healing and blessing, for which they paid her in food and drink. Despite the fame and glory she had obtained, her loyalty and affection remained with her own people, the small dwarven community of Dorob Kilthduum, northernmost outpost of Balnorhak.

## Ulek and Balnorhak

When the Anvil of the Lortmil Mountains left Balnorhak, the blessing of the gods seemed to leave with it. As Dengar prospered and flourished, disenfranchised clans from both Gilmorack and Balnorhak joined Thane Erverast in his sheltered valley, establishing a third dwarven kingdom in the Lortmil Range. Dengar grew larger, but Balnorhak diminished in strength and prestige until that ancient kingdom became naught but a shadow of its former glory. One after another, the outposts, deep mines, and ancient halls of the kingdom fell into disuse, abandoned to the incursions of goblinkind (and some say to grey dwarves). The last undermountain king of Balnorhak died, leaving behind three daughters but no heirs and none to rebuild the glory.

In the last centuries of Balnorhak, the dwarves of that kingdom intermarried with the hill dwarves of the foothills, and, ultimately, they became the dwur of Ulek. The outlying cities and territories of Balnorhak are today called the Principality of Ulek, and what was once the center of the Kingdom of Balnorhak has been reduced to the Province of Ironhelm (the common tongue translation of Balnorhak). The last vestiges of the royal house of Balnorhak now rest within the House of Corond.





# THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF MORDENGARD

## Fall of the Tyrant King and Growth of a New Nation

By Kristoph Nolen

Far off in distant Western Oerik, there are nations unknown to all but the most knowledgeable sages of the Flanaess. Amongst them are unusual cultures of orc and goblin, elves living with dragons and draconic beings, an entire realm of death cultists, even demonic gnolls. But there are also at least three known enclaves founded by dwarves.

Two are similar in many ways to cultures of the Flanaess, though there are still things which make them stand out as distinct. They are known as the Kingdom of the South, just west of Tharque, and the Kingdom of the East within the massive, impassable mountains separating Western Oerik from the Khanates and Celestial Imperium of Shaofeng. Both are carved deeply into the mountains and are ruled by a traditional dwarven king, often passed down through royal lineage.

One notable aspect of culture derives from the fact there are different animals in the mountains of Western Oerik. Massive tortoises which grow at startling rates throughout their long lives are found in the region. They are known as the **Gronnapel Brown Mountain Tortoise**, or simply a Giant Tortoise and can grow up to 12 ft across. The tortoises are placid and calm, and dwarves train them to carry enormous, broad, howdah-like platforms, and they are treated almost as siege engines, with crossbowmen using the tortoise as a mobile archery platform. There are also enormous badgers, the **Daggertooth Ratel**, as long as a man is tall and weighing several hundred pounds. Dwarves of the region have found them to perform exceptionally when trained to fight alongside them in combat.

The dwarves of the north migrated up the coast in massive barges around a millennium ago, travelling in war barges in stages, with wave after wave moving closer to their current mountain home over a century. The first settlers had no "royal" family, per se, and so all the clan chieftains came together along with important military, clerical, and social leaders. Deliberating for a decade, the leaders elected their first king and named noble houses from amongst the clan leaders, setting up a traditional monarchy as was their custom. Thus, the **Blessed Kingdom of Mordengard** came about in 206 (-213 CY), around the time of the end of the Great Migrations.

### The Blessed Kingdom

The first King, **Smoni**, was benevolent and admired, beginning programs which expanded the holds of individual clans, and connected them to each other. Even a great metropolis was created at the heart of the burgeoning new kingdom. Many years later, by the time the crown was passed upon his death, his son inherited a prosperous, wealthy, and stable nation.

There were years of wars with the neighboring elves, who resided in ancient mountain citadels guarding Abyssal Gateways since the time of the Demon War. From 757 to 778 (337-358 CY) the Kingdom of Mordengard and Empire of Ravilla battled each other in a tireless war that went back and forth with no victor. It had only begun

because the elves refused to tell the dwarves about the secret Abyssal Gateways, and Mordengard scouts had stumbled into a guarded area unknowingly. It ended with only loss, and only national disdain between the two.

### The Tyrant King

Soon, however, Mordengard had to turn inward to deal with trouble in their own homeland. The kingdom was prospering and had stability after the War of Spite ended, but there was treachery that would change the kingdom for an entire century.

The third son of the king, **Hakon**, had a vile heart, and sought nothing more than power. He knew, though, that he was far from the throne, and he'd never have the control of the kingdom he pursued. He despised his older brothers because he knew they would inherit the crown before him, so he plotted their assassination and inched closer to seizing the throne.

The king was in his late years, though, and Hakon managed the dosing of poison in his father's food every day, watching his father's lingering debilitation. When his nefarious scheme culminated in the death of the king, Hakon took control of Mordengard, and drove the nation into the darkest period in the seven centuries since its founding.

Hakon became known as the Tyrant King. He regarded commoners and workers as chattel, driving them in their labor without consideration or respect. They became barely more than slaves serving at his whim. None were treated with respect. Soldiers were disciplined by whipping, and the pay of the armies was withheld making their service compulsory. He ordered the construction of numerous grand scale monuments, thinking he would be lauded in history for the memorials and shrines he built. The last of these was known as the **King's Spire**, but the common name for it was the **Tyrant's Peak**. It was a tower which thrust up from the mountain, surveying the surrounding countryside. It was where Hakon set his capitol and there he consolidated all those in his court who were loyal to him. The most loyal soldiers in the kingdom, the King's Guard, safeguarded the Tyrant King within his tower.

Eventually, the rights of the common citizen were eroded, and eventually the soldier and even the nobles' rights waned and were slowly taken away. Most every dwarf felt oppressed and exploited and the workers of Mordengard revolted against the king in a great rebellion. There were riots in the streets, with rebels assaulting Loyalists and driving them out of their homes or businesses. The monuments and gigantic structures Hakon had built were set against and vandalized. Not even the soldiers of the regular army stood with the Tyrant King. Though most soldiers defied Hakon, his personal guard remained loyal



Art by Sam Wood, courtesy of WotC



and they pulled back into the King's Spire and secured it. The revolutionaries tried several times to pull Hakon out of the Spire to dethrone him, but his guard held their ground with the fervor of zealots, keeping the king from being taken. Unable to penetrate far enough into the Tyrant's Peak, the revolutionaries finally pulled out. Hakon knew he had won and would crush those who'd defied him.

What Hakon did not know was that the entire time, engineers had been toiling beneath the Tyrant's Spire. Every stone and brick of the tower which had become a symbol of Hakon's vile reign shook with tremendous explosions just as dawn came. There was no way for the Loyalists to prepare or find safety. The tower collapsed in a massive cloud of dust and stone, crumbling down upon itself and killing every last one of the Loyalists and Hakon, all his relatives, and those nobles who'd remained loyal to the last. His crushed body was never given a grave or sarcophagus, being left to rot underneath the ruins.

## The People's Republic

Afterward, the people of Mordengard despised the very idea of appointing another king to replace them. There would always be the possibility of another Hakon. Never again would they allow a single person to dictate their work and livelihoods.

They recognized that the cornerstone of their culture was the people who were supposed to be represented in their government. They needed to keep that focus in the change which came with the revolution. And so, groups formed themselves into guilds based on the service or function of the workers in them. Crafters, Brewers, Engineers, Farmers, Miners, Priests, Scholars, Soldiers, Wizards, Artists ... each of these would be its own guild, each member would have representation by their guild, and all citizens would have a guild to which they belong. They organized into a Worker's Council which would lead the nation. Thus, in 900 (480 CY), the Blessed Kingdom became the People's Republic of Mordengard.

In many regards, traditional dwarven culture remains the same in Mordengard. Their virtues still hold true—they are a loyal people, and they respect duty, honor,

hardiness, and pride in their craft. In fact, those virtues are likely even more prominent, now. Individuals strive to prove their worth, as positions are rewarded to each according to their contribution and ability.

All decisions are by consensus. The **Worker's Council** is comprised of the leaders of all the guilds. Each member of the Worker's Council serves a five-year term, then a new guild leader is elected from the guild rolls.

## The People's Legion

The military of Mordengard is known as the **People's Legion**, and is presided by the **Comrade-General**, who is from the **Soldier's Guild**. All dwarves, upon reaching adulthood, are proud to serve a mandatory four years in the People's Legion. It is a tradition that is revered by all, and it is considered an honor to serve. The leaders which rise in the ranks do so not because of their political connections or which clan they are from, they do so because they embody the virtues of dwarven society and culture and because they are the most suited for the job.

There are many infantry-type soldiers filling the ranks of the Republic's army. That doesn't discount many and varied specialized troops, though. The rank and file **Legionnaire** is a stout, steadfast warrior. These fighters are the standard heavy infantry of the dwarven military, and their formations bring fear to an enemy who sees them filling a cavern or battlefield.

Even without counting the more exotic duties or personnel in the army, there are specialties. The **People's Guard**, for example, is known for the tradition of protecting one's fellows, which is a strong virtue amongst the people of Mordengard - it is about teamwork and how it only makes them stronger together. The People's Guard are shieldbearers who protect their fellow Legionnaires and are known for their adroitness with shieldwork.

Surprising to many, are those dwarves who are trained as rangers. Though "ranger" often implies ties to the forest, truly it is actually a tie to *nature*. And, as any good dwarf knows, the earth and stone *are* nature. One of the **Hranikar Rangers**, sometimes known as *Lesnik's Rangers* (for their first commander) has 100 years or more of experience in the caverns and caves of the Underoerth, and are intrepid scouts. Sunless seas, narrow tunnels, and other difficult combat situations are nothing to the dauntless rangers.

Another unusual terrain some dwarves are trained to fight in is the surface of Oerth. Though many folk only associate dwarves with the Underoerth, there are highly-skilled mountaineer troops, as well. The **Macherev Raiders** are bands of quick troops who are responsible for a large portion of the security of the nation. They patrol Mordengard's outer reaches and prevent enemy incursions, as well as seeking out dangerous creatures in the realm. Some of the most dangerous of the Raiders are their snipers. In mountainous terrains, far-off shots with light and heavy crossbows are sometimes the only way to reach an enemy combatant. The deep crags and ravines.



*The Open Forum of the Worker's Council*



The culture and society of dwarves, especially in Western Oerik, is such that they have great faith in their creator, Moradin. Divine energy seems to suffuse every aspect of their daily lives. They do everything in the name of Moradin, even the name of their nation (which, translated, means something like "Dwelling place of Moradin" or "Protected place of Moradin"). Clerics of Moradin even supported the revolution against the Tyrant King, and support the Legion with healing and other divine arts. Culturally, because of all this, very few (if any) Mordengarders practice arcane arts. Clergy of Moradin even have orders dedicated to battle. **Hammerpriests** are the *militant* arm of the church of the Soulforger.

Knowing their efforts are consecrated by Moradin makes warriors even more fervent sacred motivation in battle than normal. There are some dwarves who feel this even more greatly than others. These dwarven **zealots** are nearly berserkers and storm riotously across the battlefield with the fire of faith fueling every axe or hammer swung. Many of them fiercely engaged in the revolution.

The People's Legion also has many other types of specialized troops. Many members of the Soldier's Guild train with specialized elemental weapons, giving them an edge in battle. Everyone knows stone - as earth - is one of the four elements, if not the *strongest* element. But, the dwarves of Mordengard know the elements can't be used without balance and order. Everything has a place and a use. Thus, some soldiers or the People's Legion use specially crafted magic weapons infused with ties to the elements.

**Lightning Lancers of Fyulger** use a very surprising weapon. It channels the power of the lightning bolts which strike the mountaintops, crackling with energy and scorching their enemies. It is a heavy polearm to brandish, and in the hands of an unskilled user can be dangerously unwieldy. Though usually only used to hurl bolts of lightning at opponents, the Lancers can use their polearms when in close quarters.

The thunderlash is another elemental weapon used in Mordengard. The **Thunderlashers** are Mordengard soldiers who use a special whip enchanted with the power of thunder, making them thematically linked to the Lightning Lancers. When the whip is cracked, it booms with a sonic burst that can deafen those near it. The sound of Mordengarders approaching is terrifying, because the Thunderlashers can be heard for miles. Similar in some ways to old wardrums, the sound of the coming army precedes them. While only its expert wielder knows all the techniques of using the thunderlash, deafening the enemy can easily allow dwarven units to catch them unaware, or make it easier to gain an advantage over heavily armed foes, as well as making the adversaries unable to hear battlefield commands.

The **Udarnik** wield yet another dwarven elemental

weapon. They are used especially in large-scale battles as one of the ultimate frontline assault groups. They are precisely, without equivocating, shock troops. They're sent in with the intent of causing surprise and disarray. The Udarnik often charge suddenly into combat, sometimes from cover, and get into fairly short range before surprising the enemy with a single attack from their leadblasters. These are a type of magically enchanted single-bitted axe. Though they vary in appearance, and are difficult to identify in combat, they all have one thing in common: an intricately engraved haft made entirely of steel. The haft is capped with an large, ornate lead plug about an inch (24mm) in diameter. Behind or beneath that plug is elemental air magically bound inside the hollow haft of the weapon. During a charge or even in single combat, when the Udarnik gives a battle cry (the command word releasing the magical binding), the elemental air contained within forces the plug out of the haft, sending it flying into the opposing enemy's lines.

The last common soldier using elemental weapons in the People's Republic army are grenadiers. They use perhaps the simplest of the elemental weapons. Sometimes the weapon is called a "scorch pot", but the weapon itself and their wielders are known as **Gorelka** or *Scorchers*. They carry magically sealed clay pots or jugs which hold magically bound elemental fire inside. When the scorch pot is cracked, there is an explosion of fire as it roils out of the pot then returns to its natural origin on the Elemental Plane of Fire. Some few brave Legionnaires carry these on the front lines and charge similarly and throw their pots as a first volley. They are neither heavily armed nor armored, since they have to carry an ungainly, bulky weapon the size of a medicine ball, so they aren't the *best* combatants, but, they do well enough.

Lastly, there are other actual combatants the People's Republic commonly uses in conjunction with soldiers. Among the more mundane are the giant tortoises and badgers mentioned above. Much like their weapons, others are tied to the elements. For example, there are various sizes and types of elementals who often support dwarven clerics and hammerpriests in battle. Earth elementals no bigger than dwarves are sometimes known as **Stone Spikes**, and clerics are even known to summon **Ice Paraelementals**. Obviously, impossibly tiny elementals are used in the creation of their weapons. Air, fire, and water elementals aren't uncommon in battles, either.

One of the most interesting elemental creatures associated with the Mordengard People's Legion are known as **Ancestral Guardians**. Clerics of the Soulforger are given special blessings which enable them to speak a prayer that will call to life the spirit of one of the fabled warrior forebears of the nation. In dwarven culture, it is said these spirits actually inhabit the statues and monuments carved of them, and they only come to life when called by a priest.





# THE DWARVEN MANUAL OF CREATION



## A Dwur Artifact of Moradin

By Amy "Theala" Crittenden

**Description:** This ancient book is composed of pages made of mithral foil, bound in a sturdy mithral binding sewn with wire and covered in leather. For all its age, the leather is in remarkably good condition. The writing appears to be written in black ink, however the "ink" does not scratch or wear away. Smudges are easily wiped away, and the pages do not tear. The book itself is stored in an iron bound box with a magical lock. A mithral circlet on top of the box is attuned to the owner; their handprint activates the lock to open or lock it.

The writing is all in an ancient dialect of Dwur, and the symbols are of the One Clan: the first Kingdom of the Dwarves. The book does not list an author, but a close reading of the forging secrets held within reveal him eventually: Silvervein Moradinson.

Within the book are the long-lost secrets of Moradinson's creation of many Dwarven artifacts. The book initially seems to be a work on metallurgy and metal working. Techniques for processing rare ores are detailed to produce pure metals and the best alloys of all types: iron, steel, copper, brass, bronze, silver, electrum (white gold), gold, and of course, mithral and adamantite. These techniques in of themselves are superior to most of those in use today, even by the greatest of dwarven, elven, or human metalsmiths.

The real treasure, however, is Moradinson's logs detailing his plans and work on creating the *Five Great Tools*: the

Brutal Pick, The Earthheart Forge, the Anvil of Songs, the Shaping Hammer, and the Axe of the Dwarven Lords. These plans are not written plainly, but encrypted with a secret code to protect them from casual or unwanted eyes ... requiring the reader to have access to a key to decipher the writings. That key may or may not be with the book when it is recovered.

**Campaign Use:** *The Dwarven Manual of Creation* is best used as a means to drive story and plot. The players could recover the book from a long lost dungeon, and seek to uncover the secret of its contents, or the book could be lost or stolen from a dwarven clan willing to pay anything to recover it, or the book could be the focus of a feud between competing clans eager to gain full control of the book.

A metalsmith gaining access to the book who takes 48 hours over a six days of reading and review will gain +2 to skill rolls related to any type of metalsmithing in which they are already skilled, and +1 to any type of metalsmithing in which they are not. Non-smiths gain no benefit from reading this book. This benefit can be gained only once.

The book itself does not radiate any kind of magic. However, derro or duergar who touch this book are immediately struck for 5-30 hit points of damage, and must make a Constitution Saving Throw to avoid the divine wrath of Moradin.

# RUMORS OF THE GNARLEY



## A Priestess and Her Martial Servant

By Les Reno

(Note: My hope is that DMs will find inspiration in this piece for a horror-themed adventure or sidequest suited to the needs of their campaign. It might also serve as simple gossip, just a fireside tale to create atmosphere as the PCs warm themselves against the night. The two follow a nearly forgotten goddess: Scahrossar, The Mistress of Exquisite Pain, sister of Olidammara. Details on Scahrossar can be found in 2002's *Book of Vile Darkness*.)

The woods have become stranger and stranger since the end of the Greyhawk Wars. Even with a decade's passage, curious beings and perverse cults stalk the ancient trees, and few are as mysterious as The Hand of Pain, otherwise called The Prophet of Thorn and Lash.

Late last year, rumors of a figure in antique spiked armor began circulating in the taverns and trading posts at the Gnarley's western edge. Merchant escorts, pilgrims, and other travelers spoke of a sudden burning smell comingled with the scent of freshly worked leather. At first, authorities wrote off this figure, dubbed The Hand of Pain by the sole member of a local patrol to have survived challenging him, as another grotesque eccentric. But with the attack on the first homestead, this attitude changed to worry, and with word that the figure moves in the company of a robed and hooded woman and announces

himself as The Prophet of Thorn and Lash, panic began to take hold of the region.

Soldiers and adventurers have confronted this self-proclaimed scourge, but the few survivors are broken in mind and body, rambling incoherently about the Prophet's revelations and about a "Baleful Lady" whose whip "tears into your soul as it rips your flesh" and whose hook "opens you for all to see." The testimony is always the same. "He is her Hand. She opens you, then she reaches inside you, and your heart pounds to her touch. You breathe, and your ribs ache, and she's inside you, and you're hers..."

The Prophet of Thorn and Lash leaves behind tokens of his opponents-- a face nailed to a tree; armor and clothes suspended by wires and mutilated in suggestive ways; hands arranged in a row on the ground, thorns jutting from the knuckles, the fingers of each hand posed so the effect is that of a series of esoteric gestures, like illustrations of some forgotten sign language-- but no bodies. The occasional deranged survivor, yes, but no corpses.

The survivors mention no host, no army, no confederates following the Prophet. They speak only of him, and his Lady.



# LEGENDS OF THE GNARLEY FOREST



## The Sorrowful Tale of Erann and Danala

By Les Reno

"So you leave for Beltander on the morrow, aye, lad?"

The young man in the grey robe glanced at the grizzled scout sitting across from him. Was the question a trap? After a moment filled with the drumming of rain on the tavern roof, he said, "Aye."

"And you thought you'd ply an old man with drink and maybe learn more of your destination, eh?" A pause, then a chuckle: "Come now, boy. You need not fumble and fret so. Exposed as you are, 'tis not our wedding night."

"But. I mean. But I never said..."

"And still breathless and blushing and caught. From your clothes and your obvious questions, I'm guessing you're a 'prentice wizard wanting to see skinchangers up close to try and learn the trick of it. Am I right?"

"Well, I mean. Yes."

"You'll want to be more straightforward and upfront with the werebears of Beltander than you've been with me. They're a good enough sort, but they're not keen on outsiders playing pretend. You be direct with them, and they'll reply as best they can with what they know. Let them catch the tiniest whiff of deceit from you, and they're more'n likely to chase you up a tree!"

"Anything else?"

"Well, now, that depends on your plans. You'll be looking to meet a swanmay too, if I read you right."

"... That would be ideal, yes."

The old scout looked at his flagon. The young man went to the bar and returned with a pitcher.

As he poured himself another drink, the scout said, "If you're going amongst the skinchangers, you're probably thinking of the old stories, but have you given much thought to their meaning?"

"What do you mean?"

"You know the Tales of Erann and Danala."

"Of course. Everyone does."

It was only later that the young man realized that the scout's voice changed slightly at this point, growing deeper, the diction and flow of his discourse becoming more complex, formal, even stilted.

The old man's expression remained one of amusement.

"So you've heard that a sacred tree fell under a curse, and the ranger Erann and his swanmay ally Danala walked into its fevered dream. How they witnessed the ancient battle between Lichis the Golden and the demonic Ironnose as the two raged and thrashed across the skies, and how Erann tore a burning cinder from the old tree's roots and Danala soothed its spirit. You know of the heretical and nihilistic sect of druids who preached the extermination of sentient life as the true means of restoring the Balance. You've heard their corrupt doctrines came to regard Plague and

Entropy as ends in themselves, and how Erann and Danala aided the Old Faith's Grand Druid in trapping and binding these renegades in the Grove of Thanalos. You recall the pair's last great adventure, their pursuit of the necromancer Khoven Ransek into what we now realize must have been one of the Blackthorn's many openings."

"Certainly."

"And you mourn the tragedy that ultimately consumed these heroes."

"As a boy..."

"You're still a boy. But you don't realize it."

"Listen—"

"No. Hear me out, lad. No one can say with certainty what Erann and Danala thought or felt or experienced at the end. But as the lowest of actors and wisest of scholars inform us, a tale's meaning is a matter of emphasis and perspective. Many regard the familiar story of the ranger's final days as authoritative, but this widespread version draws from accounts told by the Ranger Knights during long winters, and at the great Brewfest feast. As the Clerksburg scholars say, try removing the dancer from the dance, the teller from the tale. So when they speak of men disappearing for years among the dryads of Fern Grove, the Knights ignore the woodland perspective, and the narrative becomes a bawdy rustic comedy. In similar fashion, their telling of the Erann-Danala cycle emphasizes Erann's doom while casting Danala in a secondary role. The Gnarley's werebears and swanmays stress Danala's experience, hinting at tensions between the rangers and their sylvan allies. If you'd know of the skinchangers' way of seeing things, you need to know their version of events."

"I never knew there was another version."

"Then listen." The old man's voice and speech seemed to change again, as if he'd channeled some other presence, one used to reciting stories in a specific way, with a particular cadence. "The Gnarley Rangers claim that Erann courted Danala during those last two years. For most of that time, the swanmay pretended not to notice his efforts, the opportune appearance of some sign of wickedness providing her with means to change the topic. After the battle with Khoven Ransek, the ranger grew more persistent, his overtures bolder and more obvious. Danala emphatically rejected him, citing her obligations to the Gnarley Forest, and its creatures, and pleading with Erann to forget her and attend to his own duties. The two parted ways, and for a time, Erann wandered the woods, focused on the gathering of roses and sage, wolfsbane and blackthorn, and losing himself in the hunt. Then dreams and visions of a shadow stalking his beloved began to plague his working days, and dreaming nights. He recalled Khoven Ransek's dying words, a curse on the two who destroyed him, a promised destruction of what they



held dear. Erann rode with haste to her tranquil clearing, only to find it deserted and possessed of a silence without peace. Even her beloved songbirds had fled the stream's wooded banks.

"The Rangers say that Erann remained on bended knee for hours, sword in both hands, its point driven into the earth. Then the shadows lengthened and one separated itself from the mass. This was Danala, or rather, it was some gloom-inflected mockery of her former self. Staring at Erann was the face he loved so fiercely. The thing reached to embrace him with outstretched arms of unnatural length, and for a moment, the warrior forgot himself. He felt the life drained from his flesh, felt his essence fill her and dissipate in a grim parody of the loving union he'd imagined. Recalling what she had been, her dark locks and firm but gentle manner, her love of life and the living, Erann raised his enchanted silver blade and struck, and struck, and struck again, until a sudden breeze scattered the unholy thing like smoke.

"Then a second shadowy form rushed at him, but this time he engaged his attacker without hesitation and, after fierce struggle, dispatched the writhing horror.

"Erann searched and found Danala's signet ring, iron band rusted, seal cracked, half-buried in moss where he had destroyed the first entity. Familiar feathers lay scattered on the ground, remnants of her majestic cloak. Erann took the ring and slid it onto the growing branch of a young oak tree, as if sealing some eternal contract. It fit perfectly. He tied three feathers to the branch, placed the rest of them under his leather shirt, against his chest, and he rode west.

"They say that Erann now had the features and posture of an old man and that in his despair he rode to Bad Deep, passing the hundred yards of blighted plants and dying earth and finally entering the great dead stretch of ancient battlefield, never to be seen again."

The scout poured himself another drink, then leaned back in his chair. As he stared at the young man's face, his expression became one of regret, maybe even mourning. He sighed, and after a long intake of breath, he continued:

"But the swanmays and werebears tell a slightly different tale. They tell how Danala saw Erann become more and more certain of his ability to control circumstances, and they describe the worry the necromancer's curse instilled in her. She saw that Erann moved *in* nature and observed its ways but was not *of* nature. He had no experience of himself as a vessel made *by* and *for* it. The maiden feared that he would force her to surrender that part of herself which was not merely herself but an extension of the forest, that union of human and wilderness signified by her ring, that liminal portion allowing change from form to form, from human to swan. He would want to learn her

secret and master it. With this concern, Danala withdrew to her clearing and mourned Erann's apartness from his surroundings, his spiritual isolation from that which they both served, his necessary removal from her presence. One night, as her mind fretted at the thought like a tongue probing a sore tooth, she saw a figure detach itself from the shadows and approach her. She recognized the form the creature had chosen and she knew the curse had come for her. As it passed through and into her, as she fell beneath it, she briefly glimpsed the twin moons in their fullness. Their light struck her eyes like a silver blade, and she died."

The two were silent for a moment. Then the young man said, "What does it mean?"

The scout smiled. "Maybe it means we bring the death of whatever we love. Maybe it means there are two sorts of knowledge, the kind that comes from within a thing and the kind that comes from being outside of it and wanting to master it. Maybe it means you can claim to be of two worlds and have friends in both but the friendships, like the worlds, have edges and borders."

He lifted the pitcher, poured the last of the ale, and downed it. "Well, then. Best be off to bed if you're planning on an early start."

As he watched the scout pass the sleeping barman on his way to the stairs, the young man called out. "I didn't catch your name. Who are you?"

Without turning, the scout replied, "Me? I'm nobody, really. Just a man who used to be someone's 'prentice before I went into the woods for more learning."

#### Author's Note

Erann, Danala, and Khovan Ransek are my own creations, part of my present campaign's backstory. They're offered here as an inspiration for in-game folklore and legend. Readers interested in general information about the dryads of Fern Grove, the Ranger Knights, the swanmays, and the Gnarley's werebears can consult the **From the Ashes** Campaign Book. Andre Norton's **Quag Keep** mentions the gold dragon Lichis and "The Scourging of Ironnose," a ballad about the dragon's epic fight with an invading demonic presence; a DM can easily tie these mythic elements of the conflict between Law and Chaos into Oerth's distant past. Astute readers will pick up on a possible connection between the "heretical and nihilistic sect" and the Umber Eyes and Black Hats from Robert J. Kuntz's **Dark Druids**; at the DM's choice, Erann and Danala's encounter with the group precedes or runs parallel to that adventure.

For those interested in further reading on swanmays and werebears, Frank Hamel's **Human Animals**, recently reprinted as **Werewolves, Bird-Women, Tiger-Men, and Other Human Animals**, provides a great introduction to the subject.



Art courtesy of WotC



# LEGENDS OF THE GNARLEY FOREST



## The Sarnas Weapons

By Les Reno

The Sarnas family was one of the ancient Suel bloodlines who founded Narwell around -325 CY. Thorell Sarnas, the family's last heir of pureblooded Suel ancestry, left the town in early 122 CY. Often called The Silver Exile for reasons lost to time and deliberate erasure, Thorell settled in the Gnarley Forest, taking a Flan wife and reinventing his line as workers of bone, wood, and metal. Over the centuries, Sarnas bowyers and arrowsmiths earned renown for the weapons they crafted for the Gnarley Rangers and others. It's said that each of the seven Gnarley Knights has access to a powerful enchanted longbow of Sarnas design and make. The family's craftsmen supposedly fashioned these bows from the recovered tusks taken from now-extinct monstrosities. Like all Sarnas-made weapons, such bows are coveted by connoisseurs and dedicated woodsmen alike.

With the disappearance of Jarville Sarnas, his wife, children, and his brother Talvion in the late 490s, the family's line ended. However, the Sarnas legacy lives on through the items they made, and their roles in history and legend.

Other Sarnas designs of note include:

**Arrows of the Ruby Sorceress.** Each generation of the Sarnas family produced at least one of these arrows, the creation of which reputedly involved Suel blood magic and weeks of intense prayer to the family's patron goddess. The fletching is supposed to have been fashioned from basilisk feathers; the arrowhead was blood-red glass or crystal around a blown or carved skull-shaped bubble surrounded by stylized flames. The point would shatter on impact, releasing potent acid contained within the hollow "skull." Legend claims that no archer using such an arrow ever missed his mark. None of this ammunition is known to have survived into the present.

### Arrows of Resounding Response.

A specialty of Darwell Sarnas and a favorite of the Gnarley Rangers for decades, these projectiles varied in effect. Some shattered any glass within a thirty feet radius; others caused individuals within that space to double over, bleeding from the ears and nose. Still others are reported to have crushed the bones and organs of "missed" targets. In all cases, surrounding trees and plants were left miraculously undisturbed.

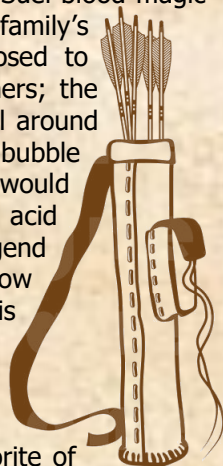
Local tradition claims that the ranger Harika Thurvell pursued the self-proclaimed "bandit king" Danias Spinecrusher into a clearing near Beltander. Harika's shot

pinned the outlaw's hat to the tree behind him. As Danias began to laugh at the ranger's aim, he heard a piercing shriek and began to raise his hands to his ears, then he suddenly felt as if someone had punched him in the stomach and through it, and twisted and yanked its contents. He clutched his gut and his knees bent. He vomited, then he soiled himself.

The Ranger Knights have at least three dozen of these arrows hidden in and around the Gilded Acorn in Corustaith.

**Staff of the Woodland Defender.** A late invention of Thorell's and one of the few Sarnas creations having nothing to do with archery, these items were commissioned by the Old Faith's Grand Druid. At a glance, a Staff of the Woodland Defender appears to be nothing more than a quarterstaff, five feet in length, made of black bog oak, and inscribed with Flan runes of inlaid silver. With a sudden movement of the wrist, three silver blades emerge instantaneously from the staff's tip, transforming the walking stick or quarterstaff into a brandistock. The blades are enchanted. When in the presence of the undead, they radiate bright light in a 10' circle and dim light to an additional 10'. While made specifically to combat bog mummies and related horrors sometimes encountered as necromantic minions and tomb guardians, a Woodland Defender deals enhanced damage against all undead. Druids and rangers may use the staff as a spell focus. Of the five staves made by Thorell Sarnas, two have been lost for years and are presumed destroyed. One of the remaining staves is in the possession of Hildefer Paravis, the current Grand Druid; Thalia Amakiir, an exile from the elven Clan Sherendyl, carries another. The third is rumored to have been wielded at one time by a mysterious spellcasting warrior to the north in the Howling Hills.

**Treecatcher.** The brothers Jarville and Talvion Sarnas made this unique bow for Parlan Bramblegate, acclaimed halfling diarist and cartographer. While it can be used as a ranged weapon, its primary purpose was to shoot custom-made arrows called *gaffers*. These arrows had small, enchanted grappling hooks as their heads. Used to facilitate tree climbing, they were coated in a special oil to prevent infection and infestation and encourage bark regrowth. A noted collector of halfling historical materials reportedly is in possession of Treecatcher and three of its missiles. One is still intact, under protective wards at his estate in Elmshire.





# TALE OF THE HEIRARCHS

## Rise, Fall, and Rebirth of the Horned Society

By William "Giantstomp" Dvorak

The origins of the Horned Society are shrouded in mystery, with several theories having gained prominence, one of which claims it is an ancient Flan cult. Despite these theories, one thing is for sure: when Iuz was imprisoned in 505 CY, the Horned Society took full advantage of the moment. Many of Iuz's neighbors, namely Furyondy, the Shield Lands, and the elves of the Vesve Forest, were delighted by this new development. Still, none of them took advantage of the chaos by attacking Iuz's lands. Their failure to seize the opportunity to secure the Old One's lands allowed trouble to appear as the Horned Society consolidated power quickly, presenting a new, highly organized threat.

As hordes of humanoids swarmed to their banners, the Hierarchs made deals with several dark gods and devils to help them gain the power needed to solidify their new conquest. The Hierarchs made the mistake of not fearing the disorganized remnants of Iuz's nation. Instead, they turned their attention to their enemies to the southwest and southeast. These new enemies kept them oblivious of the Return of the Old One to Dorakaa in 570 CY.

The Society first turned their sights on the Shield Lands in 550 CY and began probing into the area. These perpetual raids came to an end in 579 CY when the Hierarchs allied with the Warfields and Wormhall from the Bandit Kingdoms. Now facing enemies on two fronts, the divided forces of the Shieldlanders were overwhelmed and lost everything except for the city of Critwall.

In 583 CY, while the Hierarchs were still enjoying their conquests, Iuz summoned a mass of demons to deal with this upstart nation claiming his lands. These demons eliminated all but two of the Hierarchs, Andrade Mirrius, who was in Greyhawk, and Nezmajen, who was in the Bandit Kingdoms.

Without their leadership and beset by demons, the armies of the Horned Society willingly joined Iuz's ranks. While the

devastation of the Horned Society appeared total, there was a faction within the Society that had anticipated it and began initiating their plans.

From its inception, the Horned Society had two factions amongst the Hierarchs that ruled the Society. One faction worshiped or were in league with devils, and some worshiped Nerull. This alliance was always fragile, but worked so long as there were targets they could focus upon instead of each other. When Iuz returned to Dorakaa, those in the Nerull faction knew that their fortunes had changed. They began planning for an exit from the Horned Society and implementing a new plan for serving their dark lord, Nerull. It was no coincidence that both Andrade and Nezmajen were conveniently absent when the attack occurred.

With secret temples to Nerull widespread throughout the Flanaess and his worship amongst assassins' guilds particularly strong, there was already a network of followers that only needed a steady guiding hand. Andrade planned to be that hand and began recruiting and swaying lesser priests and temples under her influence in preparation for her and Nezmajen's departure from the Society. Already used to operating from the shadows, the followers of Nerull and, in particular, the assassins that worshiped him, were

excellent spies and  
helped  
remove



Art by William Dvorak



those priests of Nerull that were reluctant to join with Iuz. Much like the Scarlet Brotherhood in the south, this new Society would work covertly and gain power through assassination, blackmail, and working their operatives into key positions.

In a fortnight, Iuz's coup eliminated those Hierarchs that might have opposed the schism and cemented Andrade as the unquestioned leader of this new Horned Society. Firmly entrenched in Greyhawk after usurping the cult of Nerull there, Andrade has been able to remain on neutral terms with Turin Deathstalker, the head of Greyhawk's Assassin's Guild. Andrade knew Turin's hatred for the old Horned Society could be problematic. Nevertheless, many of Deathstalker's assassins were worshippers of Nerull, so he decided not to take any action at the time, and instead took a "wait and see" attitude.

With Iuz now firmly in control, the only remaining loose end from the old power structure is Hierarch Nezmajen. A powerful priest in his own right, he agreed with the notion that the Society needed to cleanse itself of the devil-influence so many of his fellow Hierarchs were practicing. Unfortunately, his temper and honor would not allow him to forgive the ease with which Iuz had toppled the original Horned Society. Having lost the glorious battles against Iuz which Nezmajen had been anticipating, he swore to bring down the Old One himself. Nezmajen now operates out of the Fellreev forest, having gathered refugees from the old Horned Society to his cause. He has also recruited bandits that survived the massacre at Stellbone Meadows.

Nezmajen operates primarily out of the western half of the Fellreev and is based dangerously close to Darkpool to take advantage of its magical ability to interfere with scrying. Currently on neutral terms with the wood elves, Reyhu, and the Defenders of Greenkeep of the Fellreev, Nezmajen realizes the truce will only last as long as he continues to fight against Iuz. Despite Nezmajen's lack of participation in the new Horned Society, he remains on good terms with Andrade and is still considered one of the Society's Hierarchs, of which there are now seven.

### The Hierarchs

**Andrade Mirrius:** A powerful human cleric of Nerull and one of the original Hierarchs, Andrade has become the new, undisputed leader of the Horned Society. Andrade is a clever and decisive planner, and always weighs the odds and plots ways to put himself and Nerull's agenda into the best possible position to succeed. He harbors resentment against many fellow Hierarchs, and had been making plans to expel the devil-worshippers from the Society even before

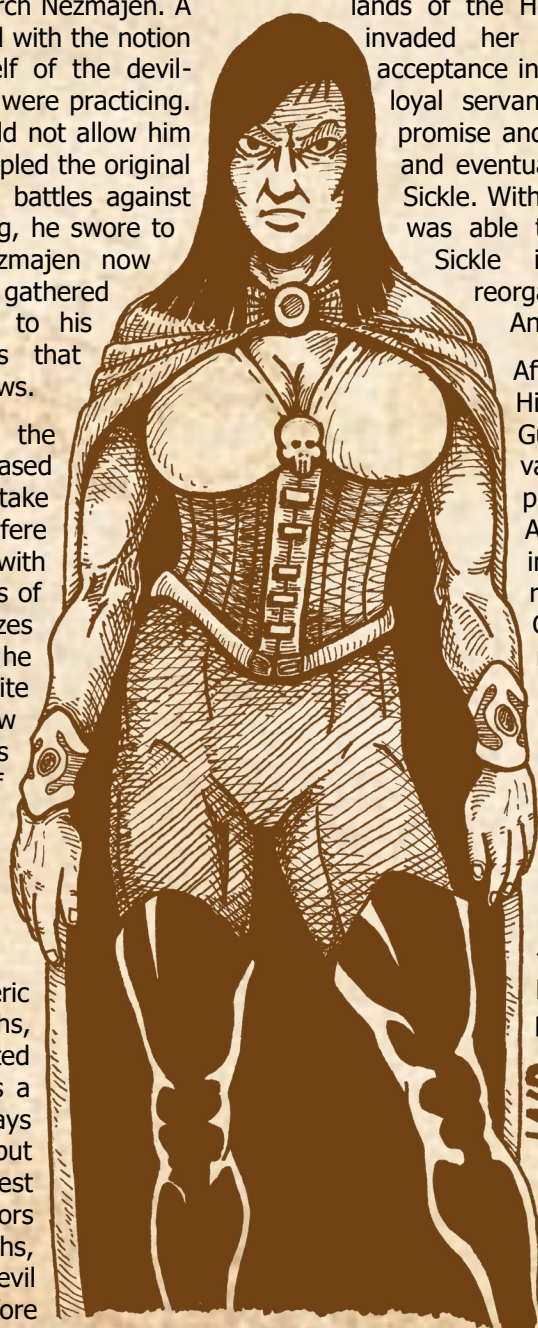
Iuz's return. By the time Iuz attacked in 583 CY, Andrade had already transitioned to living in Greyhawk City and only traveling back to Molag as needed.

**Nezmajen:** Another powerful human cleric of Nerull and the only other original Hierarch, Nezmajen has been a loyal supporter of Andrade and his goal of claiming the Horned Society for Nerull. Nezmajen has strong ties to the Bandit kingdom, having worked with warlords from the Warfields and with Wormhall extensively. Andrade knew that Nezmajen's volatile temperament ill-suited him to help the Society's new direction and has supported his aggression towards Iuz to keep him occupied. He knows that a more visible presence of the former Horned Society in the Bandit Kingdoms draws attention away from himself and the Society's true goals.

**Guiliana Mortidus:** Guiliana is a human cleric of Nerull and a native from the Shield Lands. She ventured to the lands of the Horned Society well before they invaded her homeland and quickly found acceptance in the service of Andrade there. A loyal servant, Guiliana also showed great promise and was sent to Greyhawk to join, and eventually take control of, the Shriven Sickle. With support from Andrade, Guiliana was able to take control of the Shriven Sickle in short order and began reorganizing them according to Andrade's instructions.

After the elimination of the old Hierarchs, Andrade elevated Guiliana to take one of the now-vacant positions. Guiliana has proven to be a valuable ally to Andrade and acts as his second-in-command in the Society. The reason for her loyalty is simple; Guiliana realizes that she does not have the power to match her ambitions, at least not yet. Working closely with Andrade, she hopes to one day surpass even her mentor. Still, she is patient and willing to invest the time necessary to gain that power.

**Kraeden Blackhand:** A well-traveled half-elf assassin, Kraeden has worked in many places in the Flanaess including Greyhawk, Furyondy, Aerdy, and Keoland, and has many connections in these lands. Kraeden soon came to the attention of the Hierarchs for being as skilled with words and persuasion as he is with a blade or a bow. A valuable freelance agent in their





employ, Andrade instantly saw the assassin's potential and brought him into his service after some minor persuasion.

Kraeden's connections within many assassins' guilds across the Flanaess were invaluable in helping Andrade establish a network for his new organization. Members of these assassins' guilds who worshiped Nerull were quickly enlisted and converted into agents of the new Horned Society. Kraeden's usefulness and surprising loyalty to Andrade gained him the rank of Hierarch.

**Shadira Naljin:** A Baklunish human necromancer of considerable power, Shadira fled her native home in the land of Tusmit to escape persecution for the dark arts she practiced. A studious person, Shadira is consumed with her craft and mastering every aspect of it. Not a fan of unfettered chaos, she eventually settled in the lands of the Horned Society as it provided her the opportunities she desired to conduct her research unhindered. The trade-off for this liberty came in the form of providing necromantic services for the Society.

Andrade was impressed with Shadira's talent and became her benefactor within the Society. When Andrade moved to Greyhawk, he took Shadira with him and set up a private estate in the countryside where Shadira could continue with her experiments safe from prying eyes.

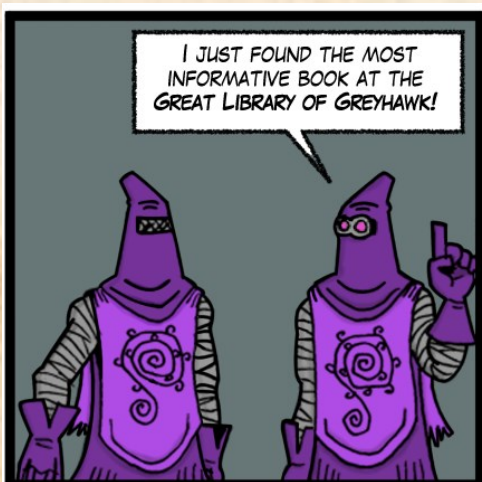
**Torqis Blight:** A human warrior priest of Nerull known as an Arrikhan (as outlined in *Dragon* magazine #106, *A Plethora of Paladins*), Torqis, technically, is still a member of the Midnight Darkness in Aerdy. He was allowed to join the Horned Society only with the blessing of the Hidden Sickie, the mysterious leader of that secret society. Andrade was unable to convince the Hidden Sickie himself to join and, to ensure harmony with that organization, took Torqis instead.

Torqis is continuously in the field performing missions for the Horned Society as determined by the collective

Hierarchs. He is a fanatic and attacks all of his assignments with zeal. Still, Andrade knows that his loyalty is to Nerull first and the Horned Society second. If at any time Torqis were to feel that orders from his fellow Hierarchs were contrary to the doctrine of Nerull, he would willingly oppose them. Fortunately, Andrade is also a devoted follower.

**Amarius:** One of only two non-humans among the new Hierarchs, Amarius is a gnome illusionist and rogue. The gnome's reputation is much larger than his diminutive size. Originally from the Bandit Kingdoms, primarily Stoink and Ravensrook, Amarius spent time in both of those cities' thieves' guilds. Amarius' devotion to Nerull, as well as his profession, set him apart from his kin early on and he is believed to have no living relatives. A highly skilled thief, he became a highly sought-after with a reputation for being able to steal nearly anything.

Discovered by Nezmajen, Amarius has worked with the militant priest on several occasions and, eventually, Nezmajen recruited him into the Horned Society. There, he came to Andrade's attention. Andrade kept an eye on Nezmajen and began using the gnome for special missions. Amarius is the last of the new Hierarchs to be appointed, and his contacts in the Bandit Kingdoms have proven invaluable.



**CULTISTS OF THARIZDUN #0**

**MIKE BRIDGES (JUN 2020)**



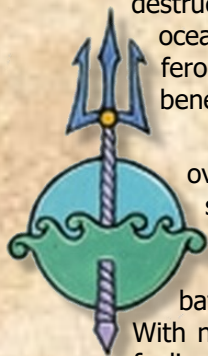
# HOT SEA AND COLD SUN



## Omnipotent View: Procan and Pelor Parley

By Richard DiIola, (aka Longetalos)

A muscular titan with blue-green skin, and armed with a great trident, sat on a throne made from a mountain protruding from an ocean gone mad. Surrounding the mountain island was a naval war of colossal proportions. Hundreds of ships fighting in absolute chaos, with no obvious goal except for the destruction of each other. Sailors falling into the ocean were faced with further horror as ferocious aquatic creatures of all sorts battled beneath the waves.



Even stranger, those sailors thrown overboard did not drown when they were submerged in the turbulent water. Instead, they pulled out knives, axes, or even used their own teeth to join in the undersea battle against sharks and other predators. With no need to breathe, and seemingly without feeling pain, the sailors fought on until death claimed them.

The otherworldly strangeness did not end there. As each sailor died, they appeared on a stone bench carved into the island mountain where the titan sat. Some sailors appeared on benches higher up the mountain, and others lower down. The bottom benches were already beginning to fill up, whereas the top benches had few, if any, returned dead.

As the battle raged on, the onlookers and the titan cheered or jeered at the actions of those still fighting. Although the ships were apparently made in differing times and were of different designs, the onlookers extolled each one as if all fought for the same inscrutable goal.

Adding to the madness, the weather itself was in turmoil. In some places the ocean was placid, while in others a storm raged with huge waves for the ships to contend with. The storms swept across the battlefield, sometimes stopping in one location for some time and, occasionally, dissipating for no apparent reason. The sky itself was a chaotic mix of darkness and light, of storm clouds and clear skies. All around the mountain island, nary another piece of land was in sight.

With all this chaos going on, an onlooker could be forgiven if they missed what happened next. A bright sun appeared in the sky and moved towards the mountain island. Instantly the titan stood up, a breastplate made of leather and shells appearing on his torso. The corals of his trident began glowing green as the titan prepared for battle.

"Hold, Procan. I am here but to talk," said the bright sun revealing itself to be a well-muscled man of

golden skin, riding a ki-rin.

"Entering my domain unannounced is a challenge, Pelor. Speak and convince me that I should not attack you," responded Procan.

"Answer me first," the sun god said, "Why do you build a new fleet? Who do you intend to go to war with that makes you pit your followers in battle to select the best warrior to man that fleet?"

"I do not intend to battle any of the other gods, if that is what you are here to find out. I but seek to send the fleet to the Abyss to teach someone a lesson."

"Would that be the 89<sup>th</sup> layer?" asked Pelor.

"How do you know that, Pelor?" Procan asked. "Have you spies on my plane? That is beneath the Lord of Light!"

"No, Procan. Your followers on Oerth are in my temple. Although the building was corrupted decades ago, an avatar of mine still resides there and he sees them. He heard one of them speak Dagon's name."

"In that case, YES!" Procan roared angrily. "I intend to send my fleet to the Shadowsea and teach that pesky obyrith what it means to come to my sea and infest it. It is bad enough that I must contend with Osprey and Xerbo, at least they are gods. But to have MY realm challenged by a demon lord, that I will not have! And if you try to stop me, I will not stand for it!"

"Quite the contrary, Procan. I came to offer assistance. Your followers on Oerth are weakened. I can sacrifice my avatar to help them defeat the demon lord's thralls in Ashenport," stated Pelor.

"Generous of you, Pelor. What is the catch?" said Procan dubiously.

"I would like you to do something for me afterwards," the Lord of Light replied. "Something that I know you would enjoy. My church in Ashenport needs to be cleansed. Since you have followers there, if they succeed, I want you to have them call upon you."

"Call upon me to do what, Pelor?"

"I want you to flood my church on the hill. Cleanse the whole village. Bring the wrath of the sea onto land and destroy it all."

"What of any surviving villagers?" asked Procan.

"They are all worshippers of Dagon. I am the god of Light, not the god of mercy," said Pelor coldly.





# THE OWLBEAR RUNT

## An Expansion to *Ecology of the Owlbear*

By Michael “Zudrak” Gross

For centuries, the aberration known as the Owlbear has plagued sages, wizards, patrols, livestock, farms, and other life forms in “civilized” lands. Combining the physical ferocity of a brown bear with the keen eyesight and acute hearing of an owl, the owlbear is a fearsome beast. Said to have been the result of experimentation of a (mad?) wizard, these creatures are like owls in that they lay eggs, are carnivorous, digest food, and are somewhat nocturnal. Yet like bears they hibernate, sharpen claws on tree trunks, roar, and love honey. In fact, their thick bearlike hides even protect them from honeybees’ wrath.

What was *not* known until recently, is that the runt of an owlbear’s litter (first rumored to be 1-6 eggs per clutch, but in fact are 2-6 per clutch) is neither feral nor ferocious. The reason for this not previously being known is that runts are usually killed by their parents or siblings. Sometimes, this occurs when they have not yet hatched, while their siblings have, and thus their nesting parents kill them while still in their eggs, thus ensuring food is not wasted on a sickly runt. The remaining runts who escape their eggs are slain by their parents or siblings after hatching because they do not possess the strong killer instincts of their relatives.

Zharina of Sterich, who is a swordswoman from a good merchant family, became a guard for her family’s caravan when she was old enough rather than sitting in a stuffy counting house keeping books. She also would even travel with other caravans to make her own coin when her family’s train was dormant due to rest, or she’d otherwise spend a week here or there away from Sterich in places as far east as Dyvers and the Free City of Greyhawk. It was on one of these journeys – passing through the Welkwood – the caravan was beset by a pair of owlbears and cubs. Zharina and her fellow guards fended off the attack and tracked the mated pair to a cave. Zharina, entering the cave before her fellows, found a single, nearly spherical blue egg in the nest. It began to wobble and crack, so Zharina took it. The owlbear family had not yet killed their runt and, thus, it was saved.

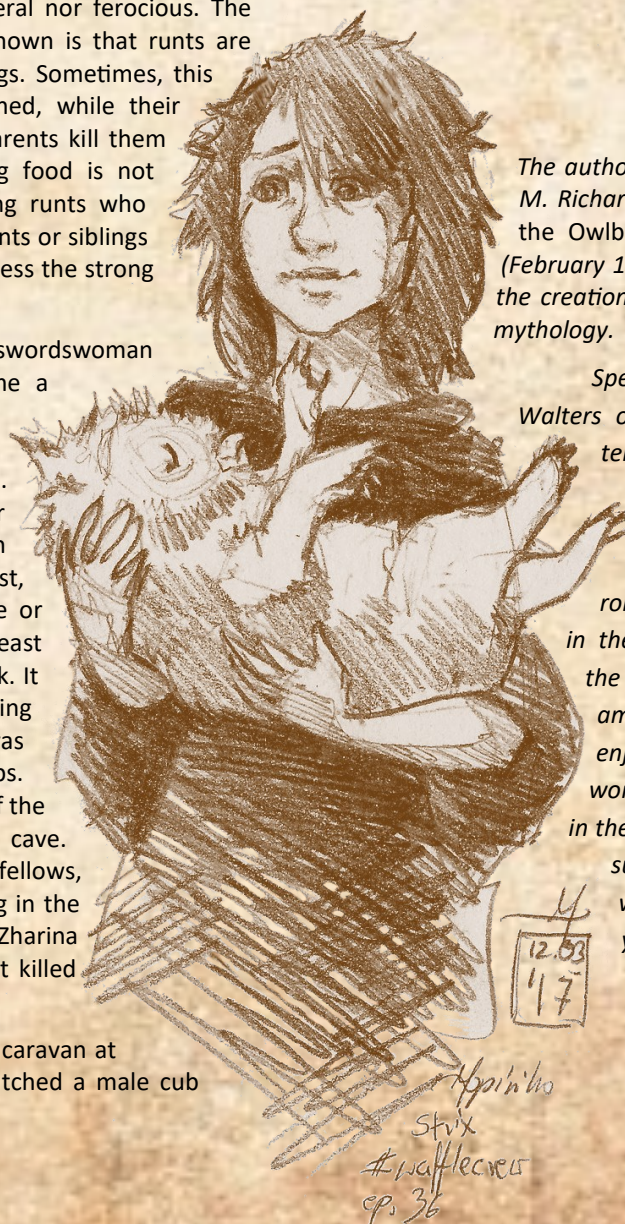
Upon returning to her family’s caravan at the end of this fateful trip, Zharina watched a male cub

emerge from the crackling blue egg. It nuzzled to her before crying out for food. Zharina spent her hard-earned coin on raw meat for her newly hatched cub. Naming him, “Ozbert,” she and the owlbearlet bonded and he quickly became her little “pet.”

Unfortunately, her family was not fond of the idea of raising an owlbear so near to their caravan (and the horses they feared it would one day eat), so they instructed her to be rid of the cub. Instead, Zharina decided to keep Ozbert company and sought out help among the elves in the region to see if their sages might know if Ozbert would eventually turn feral at some point, like the rest of his ilk, or if he could be domesticated.

*The author would like to thank Johnathan M. Richards for his article, The Ecology of the Owlbear, in Dragon Magazine #214 (February 1995). I hope my little addition to the creation lends itself well to the owlbear mythology.*

*Special thanks go to Andreas Walters of Metal Weave Games for his terrific book series, “The Baby Bestiary.” The baby owlbear as pictured in the series inspired my wife to want to try tabletop roleplaying games for the first time in the summer of 2016 after seeing the cute little critter. Owls are among her favorite animals and enjoyed visiting them often when working for the local municipal zoo in the 1990s and early 2000s. Andreas succeeded with just one picture where I struggled for over 6 years!*





# ALTERNATE VIEW OF THE GREYHAWK WARS

## A Variation on the Classic Conflict

By Jared Milne

*"Think of the number of stars in the sky; the number of grains of sand on a beach, or the number of snowflakes in a winter field. For every one of those, there are ten times ten thousand Oerths. All of them but passing dreams to us, yet entirely real to their inhabitants."*

So said the Aerdi astrologer and philosopher, Selvor the Younger, who prophesied the coming of the Age of Great Sorrow: the tragic decline of the Great Kingdom. Selvor was more prophetic than he could ever realize when he said there are countless Oerths throughout the multiverse.

The conflict known as the Greyhawk Wars shook the Flanaess to its very core during the 580s CY and loomed large in the great majority of those Oerths. On many, the outcomes of the Wars are chronicled in several works by the respected former military tactician turned sage, Sergeant Granger Tillerson, most notably in his treatise *Rising From The Ashes*. On other Oerths, however, the Wars had a dramatically different outcome. The following is an account of one Oerth heavily impacted by the Wars, but in its own unique way...

### **Iuz: War Games**

After his release from the Godtrap in 570 CY, Iuz resumed rule of the foul state that bore his name. He hatched several plots to conquer his neighbors, so that the whole of the north from Furyondy to the Thillonian Peninsula would fall into his grasp. His restoration of the Temple of Elemental Evil would give him a powerful force in the central Flanaess. His impersonation of the barbarian god Vatun would draw the Suel barbarians into an alliance with the Hold of Stonefist whose ruler, Sevvord Redbeard, he courted and magically charmed.

When the time was right, he would combine these forces with his armies and send them forth. Lands such as Furyondy, the Horned Society, the Bandit Kingdoms, and Tenh would all have to battle on multiple fronts. The entire northern Flanaess would drown in its own blood. Its surviving peoples would wish they had perished with their kin.

So, Iuz planned. Yet he became so caught up in his plotting that he ignored the schemes hatched by others. The archmages Mordenkainen, Bigby, and Nystul of the Circle of Eight learned of the Old One's plans and knew he had to be stopped. Nystul led a small band of courageous Tenha agents into the Hold of Stonefist, and used a powerful spell crafted by Bigby, Mordenkainen, and himself to break Iuz's enchantment of Redbeard. Livid that anyone would seek to control him, Redbeard massacred every agent of Iuz in Stonefist. The Tenha agents barely

escaped with their lives as Redbeard attacked Tenh and the Suel Barbarians all at once, ruining Iuz's plans to use the barbarians as puppets.

That was bad enough for Iuz, but worse was to come. The Old One's efforts to revive the Temple of Elemental Evil were defeated by Prince Thrommel at Emridy Meadows at great cost. When the battle was over, Thrommel was missing. That defeat left Iuz with no southern support, freeing Furyondy and the Horned Society to focus all their resources on him. At the same time, his armies were wracked with uprisings among his humanoid troops who were bitterly divided between those who supported him, and those who wished to return to worshipping their racial gods, like Gruumsh and Maglubiyet.

The Horned Society chose that moment to strike. They knew they were not safe with having the murderous cambion as a neighbor and that they had to act quickly, lest they lose their lands and their heads. The Society communicated with priests of many of the humanoid deities, who they knew were angry at Iuz subverting the worship of their peoples. The Society helped these humanoids infiltrate Iuz's ranks and subvert his humanoid soldiers' loyalty to him. As Iuz's plans fell into disarray, the Horned Society invaded his lands, determined to kill or be killed.

The bitter irony was that Iuz, whose efforts triggered so much of the Greyhawk Wars, turned out to be one of the conflict's first victims. His realm began to fall apart as the Boneheart, those wizards and priests who act as Iuz's lieutenants, became more concerned with trying to undermine each other and curry his favor, rather than with cooperating in a common strategy. Soon, Iuz's lands were in chaos, the Horned Society's armies crushing everything which stood in their way.

Iuz, knowing his cause was lost, gathered the Boneheart together. He told them matters in the Abyss, very similar to those happening on Oerth, required his attention and that he was going there to resolve them. In the meantime, he gave the Boneheart specific instructions. His most powerful agents, the priestess Halga and the wizard Null, would remain in Dorakaa to attempt to retake the homeland. The rest of the Boneheart were to spread out across the Flanaess in a ghoulish contest of Iuz's development. They were to conquer new territories in his name, what he called the Cells of Iuz. When Iuz returned from the Abyss, he would judge each of the Cells his minions conquered. The most successful would be Iuz's new realm, and its conqueror would be rewarded with demonhood and eternal life as Iuz's most faithful servant.



So it was that the members of the Boneheart tore across the Flanaess, adding to the suffering and destruction wrought by the Wars. Cells of Iuz appeared across the Flanaess, in lands ranging from the Cairn Hills to the Gull Cliffs, threatening all that stood around them.

But what else was Iuz plotting in the Abyss?

### ***Furyondy And The Horned Empire: Angels And Devils***

Subverting and destroying Iuz's land was not the only iron the Horned Society had in the fire. Before the Wars, the Society began courting alliances with many of the Bandit Kingdoms, and secured alliances with the Kingdoms of Warfields and Wormhall. They gathered to make war on the Shield Lands in 579 CY, a conflict that proved to be a prologue to the greater Wars.

The Shield Lands had been a bulwark of good against the evils of the north, but old conflicts with Furyondy, Greyhawk, and other states die hard. The hubris of the Knights of Holy Shielding, and their success at defeating invasions from lands like Furyondy and Nyrond, led them to stand alone against the Horned Society. Furyondy initially offered assistance, but Holmer, the Earl of Walworth and the Knight Commander of the Shield Lands, believed annexation would only be the first thing Furyondy demanded as compensation for its aid. Fighting alone might be more difficult, but it would be the only way the Shield Lands could retain their freedom and their honor.

The Holy Shield never fought more bravely than at its last stand. Holmer slew Hok, the Guardian General of Warfields, in single combat and slew the wizardly Hierarch who killed him in turn. His thrown battleaxe cut the wizard in two even as he fell to the wizard's prismatic spray. The Shield Landers made the Horned Society and its Bandit allies pay dearly for every inch of ground they gained, but it was ultimately futile. By 581 CY, the Shield Lands were no more, now fully incorporated into the Horned Society.

The Society moved quickly to consolidate its gains. Even as it attacked Iuz to the northwest, it launched a massive invasion of Furyondy, and quickly gained the upper hand. Furyondy's King, Belvor IV, already heartbroken by the loss of his son, Crown Prince Thrommel, struggled to rally both himself and his country. He lacked the force to keep his provincial lords in line, and they interfered with the direction of the war effort. Worse, their constant bickering and infighting hampered Furyondy's efforts even more. Veluna and the independent peoples of the Vesve Forest came to Furyondy's aid, but their morale was sorely tested. After a year of conflict, it appeared as though Furyondy would fall just as easily as had Iuz...

...and then a miracle occurred.

Crown Prince Thrommel, thought lost and dead at Emridy Meadows, returned home. The recovery of an injured Prince Thrommel by a halfling adventuress during an expedition to rescue Shield Lander refugees returned hope

to the people of Furyondy when they needed it most. Belvor was exhausted and burned out; the provincial lords were openly at each other's throats; and the people's morale was faltering.

Seeing the dire crisis Furyondy faced, the dynamic young prince regained his form of old. He inspired the people, who rallied to their hero as he took personal command of the armies. Belvor, rejuvenated by the return of his son, brought the bickering provincial lords into line. Thrommel's brilliant leadership saved his kingdom in its darkest hour, and no one denied the fire in his eyes when he took the lead against the Horned Ones. By the time the conflict ended in 585 CY, Furyondy had decisively defeated the Horned Society's invasion. It established a heavily guarded border between itself and the Horned Society. Furyondian soldiers manned it day and night and allowed no one to pass over it on penalty of death.

Despite the loss in Furyondy, the Horned Society's victories over Iuz and the Shield Lands made it one of the great powers to emerge from the Greyhawk Wars. In keeping with its stature, the Horned Society renamed itself the Horned Empire and would send ambassadors to many of the surrounding lands even as it annexed much of Iuz and began courting more of the Bandit Kingdoms.

Furyondy's victory was hard-won. The nation's finances were severely depleted by the expenses of war, and many of its roads and cities were seriously damaged, to say nothing of the countless brave souls who died. Furyondy, as well, emerged as one of the great military powers of the north, and Belvor with his nobles, has agreed on provisions for a fully-funded military. The line of succession is secure, and Thrommel is expected to take the throne from his aging father.

Sadly, however, the once-blossoming romance between Thrommel and the Velunese noble Jolene has withered and died. Thrommel claimed that Jolene came to him in the hills where his halfling friend had found him and that she rejected him for his negligence to his country, which prompted his return with the halfling adventuress. When Thrommel confronted her, Jolene heatedly denied his accusations and refused to ever speak to him again. Thrommel grieves over this loss, but he swears that he saw Jolene in those hills that night.

Was it all just a lie?

### ***Tenh And Stonehold: For Life And Land***

Sevvord Redbeard well-earned his title as the Great and Terrible Master of the Hold. He is likely the mightiest human warrior in the entire Flanaess, so skilled that even dragons feared his wrath. When his wrath exploded, it put a dragon's fire to shame, as he led Stonefist to invade Tenh, the Rovers of the Barrens and the Suel Frost, Ice and Snow Barbarians all at once.

The courage of the Tenha band who broke Iuz's control of Sevvord Redbeard, proved to be their country's salvation. Tenh could never have stood against the combined forces



of the Thillonrian barbarians and Stonefists. It only battled a fraction of Redbeard's forces he sent against them. Even then, victory was far from assured, as Tenh battled not only the Fists, but also raids from the Bandit Kingdoms and the Pale. The costs of the war became almost too much to bear, but in the end the same spirit that had kept the Tenha alive through the dark times of the Oeridian and Suel betrayal allowed them to triumph against Stonefist. The Fists were driven back to their corrupted home, and the pass called Thunder Pass by the Fists or Rockegg Pass by the Tenha, was permanently sealed by Nystul's magic. The Bandits were similarly thwarted, but the Wars ended with the Pale occupying Tenh's southern lands. Redspan fell to the Pale, but Atherstone held out against a siege. At the same time, the Pale began carving a road through the Phostwood, mercilessly slaughtering the fairy-folk who dwelt there. The fairy-folk were tricksters, not warriors, and were no match for the skilled tactics and clerical magic of the Pale.

The fighting was no less fierce in the Thillonrian Peninsula, as the Fists tore through the Frost and Ice Barbarians like a roaring fire. The Frost Barbarians eventually drove away the Fists, but at the cost of thousands of warriors and many destroyed towns. The Ice Barbarians lost a large part of their western territories to the Fists. The loss was due in no small part to King Lolgoff Bearhair being tricked into sending most of his warriors south to respond to what he thought was a Snow Barbarian invasion. The Snow Barbarians slaughtered the Fists who attacked them, and fought on despite the loss of their leader, the vicious King Orvung, who was slain by a frost giant chieftain allied to the Fists.

Of the three Suel barbarian nations, the Snow Barbarians emerged from the Wars in the strongest position by far. The Frost Barbarians' painful losses were only worsened by the chaos their new King, Hundgred Ralffsson, caused trying to impose upon his people the Ratikkan and Aerdi values he learned from his new wife. The Ice Barbarians, difficult and rebellious at the best of times, turned on their disgraced King Lolgoff when they learned how he was fooled. The new Snow Barbarian King, Ingemar Hartensen, is circumspect despite his fellow kings' weaknesses, considering how he might best exploit the situation...

As for Sevvord Redbeard, while his efforts at conquest were mixed, he emerged from the Wars with great prestige and plunder. He used that prestige to remake the Hold of Stonefist as the Kingdom of Stonehold, declaring himself *rhelt*, or king. One of his first acts as Rhelt was the terrifying massacre of the Ice Barbarians whose lands he captured. He ordered a road built linking the newly won Cruski territories with the rest of Stonehold, and he ordered that the corpse of one of the slaughtered Cruski people be impaled along every mile. He ordered further such milestones to be established along all his kingdom's roads to teach his own people and the rest of the Flanaess to fear him.

### ***The Rovers Of The Barrens: From Death To Rebirth***

Redbeard's prestige was tarnished by the burning of the Fist city of Vlekstaad by the Rovers of the Barrens. The Rovers appeared to be on the verge of extinction by the eve of the Wars, and they might have perished at the hands of the Horned Society. The Rover's Ataman, Durishi Great Hound, was captured and sadistically tortured by a Horned pit fiend. The saviors of the Rovers turned out to be the dashing young Paynim Tang the Horrific and his blood brother, the Wardog Nakanwa Daychaser. Tang raided Vlekstaad to gather desperately needed supplies for his Rover friends, but he was attacked by a force of Fists. Nakanwa and a force of Wardogs came to Tang's aid just in time, slaughtering the Fists. Tang was mortally wounded, and Nakanwa issued a tide-turning command. He ordered everything of value in Vlekstaad seized, including the people, and burned the town, making it Tang's funeral pyre.

The results were dramatic for the Rovers. The Fist children seized in Vlekstaad were quickly adopted, and the adult women wed. Nakanwa was hailed as a hero after distributing the horses, food, and plunder to those most in need. Many now proclaim him the new Ataman, although he cannot officially take that title until Durishi dies. Durishi seems to suffer from dementia, but the Rover elders know better. They say his mind has returned to the spirits of the Oerth, and that his body will soon join them.

When Durishi dies, the elders say that the past suffering of the Rovers will die with him. Nakanwa Daychaser represents the future, a future that offers the Rovers something they have not had since the Battle of Opicm River so many years ago.

Hope.

### ***The Iron League and the Great Kingdom: The Final Curtain***

Ivid V, the Overking of the Great Kingdom of Aerdy, was long believed to be an incompetent fool, more concerned with theatrical soliloquies than wise statecraft. Nyron and the states of the Iron League defeated many of the Great Kingdom's plots to undermine them, most notably the attempt by Chelor, the Herzog of South Province, to fracture the Iron League in 576 CY. Despite Ivid's patience growing dangerously thin at Chelor's failures, he did not execute Chelor, confirming for many his stupidity.

As it turned out, Ivid proved to be a master playwright. He kept the threat of purging hanging over Chelor's head like a sword, cowing the Herzog into obedience. That was just one of the many actions Ivid took, following a script decades in the making. By 581 CY, he accomplished the impossible - to reunite the fractured Great Kingdom into a single entity capable of attacking Nyron, Almor and the Iron League. Nyron and Almor allied with the Iron League to form the larger Golden League, an alliance to



resist Aerdy, and their union was tested sooner than anyone expected when Ivid attacked in what he knew would be the very last battle against his enemies.

The horrifying slaughter that accompanied four years of war need not be detailed here. Suffice to say that Irongate, Idee and Onnwal were invaded by the jungle savages of the Scarlet Brotherhood even as Aerdy attacked, leaving them impotent to aid Nyron. King Archbold III soon stood alone against Ivid's forces, as Almor's weak forces were ground to dust beneath the unstoppable Aerdi juggernaut.

The County of Sunndi stood similarly alone, and it too might have fallen if not for the courage of Commandant Osson of Almor. Osson knew that Almor could not stand against Aerdy's might in battle, and so he led an expedition into Aerdy itself in an effort to distract and cripple the Aerdi war machine. His forces soon found themselves in Sunndi, where they were instrumental in saving the County from falling. Osson joined with a pair of exiled Aerdi nobles, one a priestess and the other a mage. Their efforts made them the saviors of Sunndi, allowing it to endure until Aerdy's war effort collapsed.

Ivid V was a master playwright, but his skills as a director were more lacking. He dominated the Aerdi command structure with an iron fist, but his megalomaniacal obsession with destroying his enemies pushed even his mighty nation to the breaking point. Aerdy's command structure began to break down, as imperial commanders and soldiers began fighting each other for the newly won territories and treasures. Resistance movements freed Irongate and Onnwal from Aerdi conquest, although Idee's resistance was crushed. Long-simmering feuds and ambitions for power led many Aerdi commanders and nobles to try and settle old scores, and forces from different provinces were soon at each other's throats.

Finally, the situation exploded. The See of Medegia was torn to pieces by deserting soldiers, bandits and looters, becoming a no-man's land. The city of Rel Astra fought off an army of deserting soldiers intent on looting it, and closed its doors to the outside world. Finally, the Holy Censor of Hextor, Spidasa, announced that Ivid V was no longer Overking. Rauxes was consumed in a great magical conflagration. Many power-hungry Aerdi nobles, some of them undead, tried to seize the Malachite Throne, even as the North and South Provinces essentially found themselves independent.

The Aerdi heartland around Rauxes became a literal living nightmare as Ivid V's shattered consciousness engulfed it in a waking dream world. South Province held tight to the conquest of Idee, even as North Province annexed the southern half of Bone March and the Blemu Hills. Medegia remained a desolate wilderness. Rel Astra declared its independence, drawing several of the smaller cities of the Solnor Coast under its banner. The North and South Provinces would later organize themselves into their own independent kingdoms.

The Great Kingdom is now a historical memory, but the

story of the Aerdi people is far from over.

### ***Ratik And The Bone March: Like Father...Like Daughter?***

The humanoids of Bone March might have been eager invaders during the Wars, but fate had other plans. Herzog Grenell of North Province swayed most of the humanoid kings and chiefs of the southern half of the march to his banner, and they marched with him against the Golden League. The Archbarony of Ratik in turn invaded Bone March with aid from the Frost Barbarians, and conquered the northern half of the March.

The old human regime of Bone March once headed by Marquis Clement was restored under the last surviving Bone March noble, and Count Dunstan of Knurl became the provisional marquis. As the last surviving noble of the old Bone March regime, Count Dunstan was seen as best-suited for the role. His own holdings of Knurl were destroyed during the Wars, and he sought to retain his new title. Dunstan knows that he cannot command the respect of the people, mostly March expatriates who have returned home, until he finds the Key of Spinecastle, the old symbol of Clement's rule. The fate of Clement himself is also up for debate, as his body was never found.

Dunstan is also seeking to tie Bone March with Ratik, which has been ruled by his daughter Evaleigh since her fiancé Alain IV was slain and his father Archbaron Lexnol incapacitated by the news. Despite Evaleigh's best efforts, many Ratikkans do not trust a woman to lead them, much to her dismay and frustration. They are also suspicious of her father and his efforts to tie his realm to hers, even as rumors swirl of the rifts between father and daughter...

### ***Nyron: Back From The Brink***

Nyron was by far the mightiest member of the Golden League, and it claimed victory against the Great Kingdom invasion by 585 CY. That victory was almost pyrrhic, however. The devastation Furyondy suffered against the Horned Society paled in comparison to the suffering Nyron endured at the hands of Aerdy. Much of the nation's infrastructure was in shambles, nearly seventy thousand soldiers and nearly as many civilians were dead, the survivors faced empty larders, and the treasury was all but bankrupt. King Archbold III somehow managed to hold on through the enormous strain of the war years, and he resolved to rebuild his shattered kingdom.

He never got the chance. Archbold appeared to suffer a stroke in the spring of 585, and was fortunate that the senior Heironean cleric treating him recognized that he'd been poisoned. Prince Sewardt had attempted to kill his vulnerable father and seize the throne with a cabal of junior military officers. Rel Mord erupted in violence as the capital's entire Hieronean clergy took up arms in defense of their king. The clergy also magically contacted Crown Prince Lynwerd, who immediately led an army back to Rel Mord just in time. Overwhelmed, Sewardt



fled into the wilderness with his henchmen.

Archbold recovered from the poisoning, but not from the knowledge that one of his sons tried to murder him. He suffered a nervous breakdown as the shock and pain of the war years caught up with him and soon abdicated in favor of Lynwerd. Once crowned King, Lynwerd began the seemingly impossible task of restoring his gravely wounded country, first by securing aid from the County and Duchy of Urnst and the City of Greyhawk, which were all untouched by the Wars. He reduced taxes to prewar levels, sent the army's peasant levies home, and rearranged Nyronnd's internal borders to try and improve the flow of money to the treasury and reward those nobles who stayed loyal during Sewardndt's rebellion. He even opened trade with what would become the United Kingdom of Ahlissa, much to the shock and anger of many of his own people.

Lynwerd fights hard for his people every day, and his successes are noted by all. However, the situation remains perilous. Just as the Theocracy of the Pale seized the southern lands of Tenh during the wars, it seized the northern lands of Nyronnd. Those lands are not lost to the Theocracy, but Lynwerd lacks the resources to drive them away. Worse, much of the kingdom's infrastructure remains in ruins, many of its citizens are starving and the treasury remains heavily in debt.

Lynwerd does all he can, but will it be enough?

### ***The Scarlet Sign: To The Memory Of The Lost Imperium***

For centuries, the Scarlet Brotherhood dreamed of recreating the fallen Suel Imperium. The Brotherhood's plan was three-fold. First, their spies infiltrated other Flanaess societies, contacting those Suel elements who agreed with their poisonous ideas. Then, the Brotherhood caused upheaval in the lands it planned to subvert by sending its Fodder, its ill-trained jungle savages (most of whom were themselves Suel, ironically enough) to invade while its agents used spying, murder, and other actions to maneuver their Suel sympathizers into positions of power. Finally, the Suel sympathizers would secretly join their realm to the Brotherhood's Great and Hidden Empire, taking actions as directed by the Brotherhood and the Father of Obedience, Korenth Zan, to further the Brotherhood's spread across the Flanaess.

The Brotherhood spent the years leading up to the Wars infiltrating the societies of the rest of the Flanaess, waiting for the ideal moment for their spies and Fodder to strike. That moment came during the Wars, when armies of jungle savages attacked the Lordship of the Isles, the Hold of the Sea Princes, Onnwal, Irongate, and Idee all at once. These attacks seemed to come out of nowhere, and were easily crushed, but they were merely a feint for the Brotherhood's agents to do their evil work. Unfortunately, the invasions of the Iron League states by the Great Kingdom thwarted the Brotherhood's efforts in those

lands, so that Irongate and Onnwal remained free. Idee fell, but it was conquered by the forces of South Province, not the Brotherhood.

They were far more successful in the Hold of the Sea Princes and the Lordship of the Isles. The Fodder were never publicly associated with the Brotherhood—they merely seemed to be unprovoked invasions. Their attacks were successful, however, assassinating many of the ruling classes in both nations who were not Suel and would not participate in the Great and Hidden Empire.

Any nation the Brotherhood of the Scarlet Sign corrupted would remain the same on the outside, retaining many of its laws and systems of government, albeit changed to favor the Suel above all. Corrupted nations had considerable latitude in their own internal affairs and foreign relations, although they would obey the Brotherhood's goals as needed. These arrangements provided an important layer of secrecy and subtlety for the Brotherhood, which lacked the military prowess of most other evil forces in the Flanaess.

This system also allowed the Brotherhood to be flexible in responding to unexpected events. The Brotherhood intended both the Hold of the Sea Princes and the Lordship of the Isles to generate wealth for it through their impressive trading networks and to ferry its agents further north as needed. The Lordship plays that role well, but the Hold of the Sea Princes erupted in a violent civil war as many of its Sueloise slaves revolted. The Brotherhood were nothing if not pragmatic, and supported certain rebel Sueloise slave leaders. These corrupted leaders eventually won the Hold's civil war with the Brotherhood's help. In exchange, they use the new state they created in the Hold's place to supply the Brotherhood with additional bodies as Fodder.

The Brotherhood's insidious tentacles spread most thickly in the south, but they reached as far north as the Thillonrian Peninsula. When the Ice Barbarian King Cralstag rejected the Brotherhood's overtures, its agents murdered him before being slain by his nephew Loggoff, who took the Cruski throne. The Brotherhood got its revenge during the Wars when it tricked Loggoff into thinking that the Snow Barbarians were preparing a great invasion of Cruski. Loggoff rallied his forces to face the phony Schnai threat, which left the Cruski's western lands wide open to being conquered by the Hold of Stonefist. Loggoff was disgraced in the eyes of his people, to the Brotherhood's satisfaction. The Brotherhood also infiltrated the Frost and Snow Barbarians, winning important ground with the former, who seek to maintain their independence from the latter.

The Brotherhood is like a cancer, continuing to spread its corruption throughout a Flanaess that mostly does not realize it is infected.

Will lands such as Sunndi, Keoland, and the County and Duchy of Urnst realize the danger before it is too late?



### ***The Pomarj, Celene and Ulek: I See Fire***

The Slave Lords were as close to a ruling force as one could find in the chaos of the Pomarj, but they never sought to govern the place, much less forge it into an empire. And yet, their defeat in 579 CY heralded the rise of an even worse threat, that of the messianic half-orc Turrosh Mak. Gifted with mesmerizing charisma, terrifying strength, and nearly unsurpassed fighting skill, Mak rose to become the effective dictator of the Pomarj, ruthlessly forming its humanoid tribes into an iron-fisted army. When the Greyhawk Wars came, Mak released these armies in a storm of destruction against Celene, the Wild Coast, and the Principality of Ulek.

The Wild Coast, long considered the garbage dump of the Flanaess, was forever destroyed. It was where the incompetents, the failures and the second-raters of the Flanaess migrated, and they stood no chance against the endless humanoid hordes. The County and Duchy of Ulek quickly came to the Principality's aid, but the fairy kingdom of Celene stood apart from its allies. Queen Yolande publicly said that she did not wish for any elves to die in humanity's wars, an act that angered her Ulekian allies and even many of her own subjects. Fighting between the Pomarj and its enemies quickly bogged down, as a large part of the Principality was occupied but Mak's armies could push no further.

By the Wars' end in 585 CY, the invasion of the Principality fell into a stalemate. Mak set about consolidating his gains and putting down infighting among his humanoid troops. He also set about fortifying the former Wild Coast, creating a dangerous border that looms ominously over the free cities of Greyhawk and Dyvers. Neither city is known for its military prowess, and there are fears that the new Orcish Empire of the Pomarj, as Mak calls his realm, would slaughter them if it invaded. The Orcish Empire could yet be a double-edged sword for the free cities, who are bitter enemies. If Greyhawk or Dyvers could induce the Empire to attack the other city, they could gain a stranglehold on the Flanaess' central trade routes, to say nothing of the Pomarj's potential as an ally.

Intrigue is also rife among the demihumans west of the Empire. Queen Yolande's decision deeply affected many of her own subjects, who felt it was a betrayal of their long-standing allies. They also harshly criticized many of her advisors, most notably Onselven and the People of the Testing, who they consider a dangerous influence on Yolande and the elven race as a whole. The conflicts among the elves of the Flanaess are not new, though with the rise of the People they may run deeper than ever before...

### ***The Sheldomar Valley: Going To War Without A Pipe Organ***

In 581, the lands of the western Sheldomar Valley were

attacked by roving mobs of giants, causing great upheaval and suffering. A band of daring adventurers was sent to find and slay the leaders of the giant raids. The adventurers found the situation was more dire than any of them could have imagined. The drow, long believed to have simply been a myth, were using the stupid but very charismatic fire giant Snurre Iron Belly as the figurehead of a tremendous giant army they planned to have invade the Sheldomar. The drow priestess Eclavdra hoped to use the power generated from these conquests to seize power in the drow homeland. Her plans were thwarted by the adventurers, as was the attempt by the priestesses of the drow demon goddess Lolth to seize control of the giant army themselves.

The adventurers' actions saved the lands of Geoff, Sterich and the Yeomanry from certain doom. With the deaths of Snurre and the other giant leaders like the hill giant Nosnra and the frost giant Grugnir, the giants' army was effectively decapitated and deprived of its leadership. The giants were still eager for blood and treasure and attacked the human lands, but they did so as a bunch of disorganized mobs rather than the effective, powerful army Eclavdra hoped for. They fought each other as often as their human and demihuman enemies, something that proved to be the smaller races' salvation.

Geoff, Sterich, and the Yeomanry fought for their lives against the giants, and the first two states called on their lords in Keoland for help. Unfortunately, even those who joked about Keoland's infamously weak armies did not realize how badly rusted and decrepit the Keoish war machine was. Keoland's soldiers were poorly trained and badly led, their commanders chosen by nepotism rather than merit. Worse, that aid was often late in coming, as Keoish leaders like the court wizard Lashton tried to exact stronger allegiance from their vassals in exchange. Those same vassals angrily cursed Keoish incompetence, remembering the old saying that going to war without Keoland was like going to war without a pipe organ.

One charismatic giant leader named Galmoor tried to take advantage of the human infighting. Styling himself 'King' Galmoor, he tried to unite his fellow giants under his banner. One of the adventurers who defeated Eclavdra, a Keoish ranger who remained to battle the giants, slew Galmoor in single combat, preventing the giants from uniting and allowing Geoff, Sterich and the Yeomanry to eventually triumph.





It was almost a pyrrhic victory. Many in Geoff and Sterich were furious at Keoland's politicking and the sorry excuse for military aid it provided. King Kimbertos was scandalized by the fiasco and used it as an excuse to push badly needed reforms to the Keoish army structure. There was less he could do about the political arguing between Niole Dra, Gorna, and Istivin, however, as he could not be seen arguing so openly with Lashton. Lashton's threats to Keoland's vassals were all too loud, even as whispers emerged in the west about seceding from the Lion Throne altogether. King Kimbertos tried to remedy the situation but was becoming increasingly unpopular both among the native Keoish for his social reforms and among the Geoffites and Sterish for his court's actions.

King Kimbertos does his best, but are his hands too tied to remedy the situation?

### ***Bissel, Ket and Perrenland: Death And Taxes***

If any state was truly utterly destroyed by the Greyhawk Wars, it is the unlucky March of Bissel. The star-crossed Littlemark was living on borrowed time well before the Wars. Long-standing social, diplomatic, and economic failures made the Bisselites a people who had lost faith in their leaders, their armies, their gods, their fellow citizens, and especially themselves long ago. The Border Companies were an impressive military force, but they were but a shell that concealed a rotting social foundation and a national fabric coming apart at the seams.

When the Baklunish realm of Ket invaded during the Greyhawk Wars, as part of a larger plot originally hatched by Iuz, it was almost a kindness to put the wretched Littlemark out of its misery. With so many of its forces fighting the giants further south, Bissel's remaining soldiers were easily defeated by Ketites who were superior in morale and training. Indeed, many Bisselites embraced the Ketite conquest as giving them something to believe in again. Almost all of Bissel was quickly incorporated into Ket, making it the only Baklunish state with territory in the Flanaess proper. Mass conversions to the Baklunish faiths ensued, as temples to the old gods were destroyed along with the rest of Bissel's state infrastructure.

Gran March, long the Sheldomar state most hostile to the Baklunish, was both horrified and enraged by the events happening to the north. They might have intervened to drive out the Ketites, but most of their own forces were committed to battling the giants. As it was, Gran March could only invade Bissel itself and annex the southernmost part of the realm. Gran March's advance was aided by the fall of Iuz costing Ket its main ally. Ket's attempts to expand into Veluna were defeated, and it briefly fell into chaos when Beygraf Zoltan was assassinated. Ket also suffered a loss in trade for trafficking with Iuz, and the loss in tax revenue prevented it from further expanding beyond the ruined Bissel.

Further north, Perrenland was one of the few Flanaess

nations more concerned with internal affairs than external conflict. Voorman Franz kept his country out of the Greyhawk Wars by signing non-aggression pacts with both the Horned Society and Iuz. He expected to be lauded by his people and did not anticipate the backlash that came. Many of Perrenland's neighbors, such as Highfolk, Furyondy, Veluna, and many of the demihumans of the surrounding hills, mountains, and forests were disgusted with Franz's diplomacy. They voted with their coffers, costing Perrenland dearly in trade. Franz's people, outraged at how his actions thinned their purses, forced him to resign in disgrace. His successor Karenin is trying to repair the damage done by Franz's short-sighted policies, but his council is deeply divided.

Death and taxes have led to many changes in the northwestern Flanaess, but will they be the last ones?

### ***Nevertheless, They Persisted***

The Greyhawk Wars were a time of great upheaval and change in the Flanaess. Many innocent people lost their lives, and many more had their lives forever altered. Homes were ruined, knowledge was lost, fortunes were destroyed. The Scarlet Brotherhood continues to extend its poisonous reach into the Flanaess. The Horned Empire looms over all its northern neighbors, while the Orcish Empire of the Pomarj threatens the free cities on the Nyr Dyv and the peoples of Ulek. The Great Kingdom of Aerdy is no more, but the new kingdoms of Ahlissa and Northern Aerdy lay claim to its wicked legacy. Cells of Iuz continue their master's ghoulish contest, even as Iuz himself plots from the Abyss. Some states of good were destroyed, possibly forever, while others were sorely weakened. Other wicked individuals, ranging from cruel warlords to depraved spellcasters, hatch new plots that could bring catastrophe.

But while the forces of evil won many battles, so too did the forces of good. While much was destroyed, much more was saved. The peoples of lands ranging from Nyrond to Furyondy to Geoff to Tenh to Sunndi stubbornly refuse to give up, determined to rebuild what was lost. The forces of evil have problems of their own. The Scarlet Brotherhood's intrigues and rivalries yet threaten to undercut its mission, the Orcish Empire's forces are at a stalemate in Ulek, and the Cells of Iuz are just as apt to plot against each other as any land they seek to conquer.

Good and evil both persist. Light and dark fade into grey. Change and sameness are intertwined.

Such, then, is the truth of the Greyhawk Wars.



# HOUSECLEANING



## A 2nd level WORLD OF GREYHAWK adventure for D&D 5e

By John O'Neil Roy — [@johrouycomic](#)

This adventure presumes that players have been through **Unwelcome Guests** ([available free online](#)) before starting this adventure. If that is not the case, the adventure can easily be run without it. Your players can begin anywhere in eastern Furyondy. Just ignore everything until the wizard Segrius arrives. If the invitation to a secret and exclusive Wizard's Bazaar where magic items are traded is not enticing to the players, make Segrius' reward for clearing out his tower sufficient to motivate the players. Everything else can be run as is. Stats for magic items can be found in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*.

If the first adventure was played, this assumes the PCs killed Father Zoreg and are now in possession of his magic box. If Zoreg escaped with the box at the end of *Unwelcome Guests*, simply have the players come across the box on the outskirts of Cardyn's Cove. Zoreg's fate is up to you, but somehow he was forced to abandon the box near the city limits. It doesn't matter how the box gets into the player's possession, as long as they have it at the start of the adventure.

If Father Goren or Kensa Waters or any other NPC mentioned in the adventure died in *Unwelcome Guests*, ignore their presence and adjust the situation accordingly.

### New NPCs

- **Sir Kedwyn Waters**— Kensa's brother, young, confident, impatient
- **Wynna the Squire**— Serious, ambitious, anxious to prove herself
- **Segrius**— Newly free wizard, cocky, happy to be free of his former master
- **Hedec**— No-nonsense provisioner, proud of his work, won't budge on price
- **Faedra**— Sad, ashamed young wizard, can't believe what a fool she was
- **Amon**— Suspicious, small minded townie, full of fear
- **Sister Gwenna**— Impatient, brash, cleric of Tritheron, quick to act
- **Brod**— Even keeled businessman, family first, wants to avoid violence
- **Mavis**— Strong mother and wife, supports Brod but has equal say
- **Lillen**— Young dutiful daughter, funny in a dry way
- **Bellus**— Wide eyed kid who can't wait to see the world, sick of Moonglade
- **Mahone**— Murderous gleeful redcap, hell bent on killing humans as revenge
- **Brigid**— Duty-minded sprite, appalled by injustice, ready to fight

### Read to Players:

It is Godsdays, the 5th of Harvester. It's been three days since Cardyn's Cove was held hostage by the evil Father Zoreg and retreating forces of the Empire of Iuz.

Father Goren is getting the Church of St. Cuthbert ready for the funeral of your former employer Cydan of Hardby. Cydan's daughter, young Kensa Waters, has told you that a wizard of her late father's acquaintance will attend the funeral. He can examine the magic box that Father Zoreg guarded with his life, and perhaps find a buyer for its contents. In the meantime, she has invited all of you to her father's wake at Lakeside Manor, her family estate. It is tonight.

**Lakeside Manor** is modest, for the mansion of a wealthy trader. Still, it is the most impressive home in Cardyn's Cove. Cydan lies in a closed casket in the living room and the town's leading lights have come to pay their respects. Ygraine and her partner play a tasteful medley of songs. Father Goren blesses the body, his wife and son in their Godsdays best. Lionas the Reeve greets everyone at the door. Kensa tries not to cry in the receiving line.

The Waters' butler Ollant serves drinks and crab cocktail.

Father Goren's wife Jelena thanks the PCs for saving her son Sesin. She tells them they have found a home for the girl Ivaine and her two brothers, who the PCs saved from Iuz's soldiers. At that moment, Kensa's brother **Sir Kedwyn Waters**, 26, arrives. He is a newly anointed **Knight of the Hart**. He is joined by his female squire Wynna and two soldiers. Kedwyn was given leave by the Knights to attend the funeral and set his family's affairs in order.

### Interaction One

Kedwyn thanks the PCs for saving his sister and his family home. He then asks Kensa if he could have a moment alone with them. They retire to his father's study. He tells them about the Knights. "The Knights of the Hart are an Order of humans and elves that spans three nations. We currently have but one purpose. We fight Old Wicked and we won't rest until he's dead."

Kedwyn heard news of what the PCs found on Zoreg's body. He wonders if there are any demon globes left. In return for one, he would defy his orders and tell them a story he learned from Furyondy's spies in Axeport.

If the PCs do not give him the globe, he tells them he



expected better from defenders of Furyondy. He returns to his sister, and shuns them for the remainder of his stay in town.

If they give him a demon globe, he tells them how the powerful warlock **Waquonis** was Iuz' governor in Axeport. How he gave Father Zoreg a sacred mission before he died, entrusting the box to him with great care.

He will relate how Zoreg and his men left the castle the night before the siege. How the Devoted would not have fled if they weren't given direct orders. "Scar-heads fight to the end." How Waquonis died smiling, satisfied that the box was safe.

He tells them that the boxes are built by Iuz' priests, and only they can open them. The boxes give off a magical pulse they can track. Old Wicked has a spy network in Furyondy called the Shadow-claw. They will hunt the PCs now for sure.

The next day is the funeral of Cydan Waters at the Church of St. Cuthbert. The entire town is there. The Church looks beautiful. During her eulogy, Kensa vows to continue her father's work, making Cardyn's Cove the fishing capital of Furyondy.

After the ceremony, the wizard **Segrius** approaches the PCs. He is short, round, and ambitious. He wears a cloak of billowing. He has just completed his apprenticeship with the wizard Janzipur who is a ruthless Bandit Kingdoms refugee who serves the King of Furyondy on the Eastern Front. Kensa's father stocked Janzipur's castle, and Segrius was the master of provisions.

## Interaction Two

Segrius introduces himself. "I was the apprentice of the Wizard Janzipur, a ruthless and powerful man. He serves the Viscount of the March at Castle Eyeberon."

Segrius examines the box. The only way to open it now that it's original owner is dead is to cast Anti-Magic Field on it, a spell far beyond his capacity. But there may be an answer...

"Once a year, the wizards of Furyondy and their allies will gather to buy and sell magic in a secret location. It's called the **Wizard's Bazaar**. You must have a special pass, **The Wizard's Writ**, to enter. This keeps the non-magical rabble out, along with any enemies of the Crown. I can help you get in, if you'll help me. My master was a refugee from the Bandit Kingdoms. Iuz conquered his home city and he was tortured by hobgoblins for months. He escaped with only his life and a burning desire for revenge.

It is customary to give an apprentice money when he begins his career, but Janzipur had none to give me. He killed many hobgoblins

for Furyondy. He got the Baron of Willip to grant me the deed to **Moonglade Spire**, a small tower three days march from here. It was built by a woman named **Faedra** 350 years ago, when Furyondy was just a minor province of the Great Kingdom of Aerdy. She grew the tower out of wood, with a magical technique long forgotten. She disappeared soon after. The tower has been empty since.

The local farmers won't go near it. I know enough about the ancient wizards of the Great Kingdom to know it could be deadly. Magic was commonplace back then. The tower is likely to be drenched in it. Kensa tells me you killed demons and many of Old Wicked's soldiers. If you inspect Moonglade Spire, and pronounce it free and clear of all dangers, I will give you my Wizard's Writ and tell you the location of the Bazaar."

**Hedec the Provisioner** will provide the PCs with any equipment they need at Player's Handbook prices. They can buy horses and a pack mule from Lionas' stables. Segrius gives them a map. He has a contract to help Lionas rebuild the town. He will stay at the Narwhal until their return.

## MOONGLADE

### Map One Key

- 1) Brod's Boarding Barn
- 2) Brod's Farmhouse
- 3) Trithereon Worship Tent
- 4) Sister Gwenna's Farm
- 5) Amon's Farm
- 6) Farm House, Militia Member
- 7) Farm House, Militia Member
- 8) Road to Moonglade Spire





## Map Two Key

- 1) Moonglade Spire
- 2) Tangled Vines, Movement Half – Speed
- 3) Northern Limit of Blight Curse
- 4) Southern Limit of Blight Curse
- 5) Road to Moonglade farms

If the PCs ride, the journey takes a day and a half. If they walk, it takes three. They must make their way north, through grasslands, to **Moonglade**, an area of unincorporated farmland in the Barony of Willip. A DC 15 Perception check will reveal they are being tailed by **Amon**, a young man of 19.

If they confront Amon, he protests that he was simply curious about an unknown party of travelers moving through the area. These farmlands rarely get armed strangers moving about. A DC 20 Perception check will notice a symbol of **Tritherion** around his neck. A DC 15 Religion check will provide basic knowledge of the Chaotic Good god of Liberty and Retribution and his followers. Amon has nothing of value. He knows a **boarding house** near Moonglade Spire and points out the direction. He says the land around the tower is cursed.



The PCs pass two Corn Farms on the way. Goats graze in pastures. Farmers eye them warily, some making signs of Tritherion as they pass. Finally, there is a sign in Common that says "Travelers Welcome." This is Brod's Boarding Barn.

It is a large barn, with cots laid out. Alongside it is a farmhouse. There is a free-standing back house that's used as a dining hall. A farmer couple, Brod and Mavis run the boarding barn with their children Bellus and Lillen.

Brod is a big guy and can handle himself in a fight. They warn the PCs that the locals have been unfriendly since the war, and that they shouldn't tell anyone they are heading to Moonglade Spire.

Brod and his family invite the PCs for a simple farmhouse dinner of corn and goat cheese and goat stew. There is a symbol of the nature goddess **Beory** on the mantle. The family is polite and friendly. The boy Bellus is infatuated with the adventurers and is full of worshipful questions about monsters and fighting. His parents do their best to curb his excitement and remind him that such things are way too dangerous for a little boy. If asked, the farmers will tell the PCs the tower is cursed.

Tangled vines, weeds, and giant inedible pumpkins grow uncontrollably for three acres around it. No farming is possible in its immediate vicinity., and each year the cursed area grows larger. No one has gone inside for years. The last ones to do so were a teenage couple, Mack Pratt and Myllis Green, on a dare



when Brod was a boy. They never came out. Brod warns that the locals do not like people poking around the tower, for fear they will worsen the curse's effects. They will lead the PCs to the barn where their cots and bedding is laid out for them, along with a washtub. There is a well between the barn and farmhouse.

That night, the PCs are visited by a local mob. Sister Gwenna, Cleric of Tritherion, leads six Villagers carrying torches and picks. She has a trained falcon. This is the Moonglade Militia, who run off anyone attempting to disturb Moonglade Spire.

Gwenna demands that the PCs leave Moonglade at once. "Foul servants of Old Wicked. You must be Iuz's patrol! The ones that took over that fishing village!" If the PCs carry the Impenetrable Box with them, she senses its demonic magic with a detect evil spell. Brod comes outside to warn the militia off his land. It gets tense fast. The villagers are willing to burn down Brod's barn if things go haywire. The PCs must use magic, Intimidation, Persuasion, or judicious non-lethal violence to defuse the situation.

## Encounter One

### Gwenna, Cleric of Tritherion

AC 13 ;HP 27; 2 AT +2 to hit, DMG 1d6, mace; XP 450, May trade 1 Spell Slot for 3d6 per level extra damage on successful hit, Spells – Cantrip – Sacred Flame, Thaumaturgy, 4 slots Lvl 1 - Cure Wounds, Guiding Bolt, Sanctuary, 3 slots Level 2 - Spiritual Weapon, lesser restoration, 2 slots Level 3, Spirit Guardians, Dispel Magic.

### 6 Peasant Militia in Rusty Chain Mail

AC 16; HP 4 ;+3 to hit, Spear; range 20/60 ; DMG 1d6+1; XP 25



### **Falcon**

AC 13; HP; 1 to hit, +5 DMG 1; XP 10

### **Brod (Ally)**

AC 13; HP 16; 2 AT +4 to hit Shortsword, DMG 1d6+2, Longbow 1d8+2

## **Encounter Two**

Brod's Boarding Barn is half a day's march from Moonglade Spire. When they reach the tower, the ground is indeed covered in over-sized, tangled vines and weeds, and massive warped pumpkins. The tangled vines cover a circle one hundred feet in any direction from the Spire. The vines cut anyone traveling through them to half their Movement Speed. Arrayed among the tangled weeds are three Scarecrows, leftover from Moonglade's past owner, which come to life and attack the PCs. Once they attack, the PCs discover that young Bellus has snuck away from his father's farm to watch them. One Scarecrow moves towards the boy after the second round of combat, with intent to kill. If the PCs save Bellus, they will get a reward from his father. If not, Brod and all the locals attack on their return.

### **3 Scarecrows**

AC 11; HP 36; 2 AT +3 to hit, Claws; DMG 2d4+1; XP 200 Glare DC 11 Wisdom Save or paralyzed with fear until Scarecrow's next turn.

### **Bellus**

AC 11; HP 3

After defeating the Scarecrows, the PCs may enter the Spire. It was seemingly grown out of solid oak, with organic openings where glass has been set for windows. It is five stories tall, and narrow around the middle.

Carved into the double doors is the heraldry of the Great Kingdom.

## **Moonglade Spire**

### **Level One**

#### **Foyer**

The grand entrance-way smells of 350 years of musty air, dust, and rot. Cobwebs grow thick in the corners. It is dark. A magical moving painting sits on the left wall. The heraldry of the Great Kingdom hangs in the Graduation Hall. What looks like a short animated film in the style of a "Dutch Masters" oil painting plays on repeat: A redheaded young woman in a wizard robe graduates from some kind of school, receiving a scroll and a small velvet box from a smiling professor



while her family cheers.

Wooden double doors lead on to the...

### **Living Room**

There is a massive fireplace and the ruins of comfortable furniture. Two suits of ornate plate mail decorated in the heraldry of the Great Kingdom stand beside the fireplace. A bookcase contains a book in Old Oeridian called *The Hidden Grove: Journeys Through the Feywild* by Hirodus the Sage. It describes another plane of existence populated by fickle and powerful woodland beings. Also, there are several bound volumes of *The History of Magic in the Flanaess*. There is also a License to Practice Wizardry in the Viceroyalty of Ferrond signed by His Majesty, Ivid II, Overking of the Great Kingdom of Aerdy, dated 226 CY. There is a map of Ferrond which looks like what is now Furyondy.

## **Encounter Three**

If the PCs touch anything, they will be attacked by the suits of Armor.

### **2 Suits of Animated Armor**

AC 18; HP 33; 2 AT +4 to hit; DMG d6+2; XP 200; Immune to Mental AT

At the end of the encounter, the PCs will find one Hat of Wizardry on a hat rack on the ground.

### **Kitchen**

The kitchen is old and ruined. Mice scurry across the floor. A strange Giant Butterfly flies through the kitchen as the players search it. It is bright blue, beautiful and otherworldly. On the counter is one Heward's Handy Spice Pouch, and one Bead of Nourishment.

Stairs going up lead to...

## **Level Two**

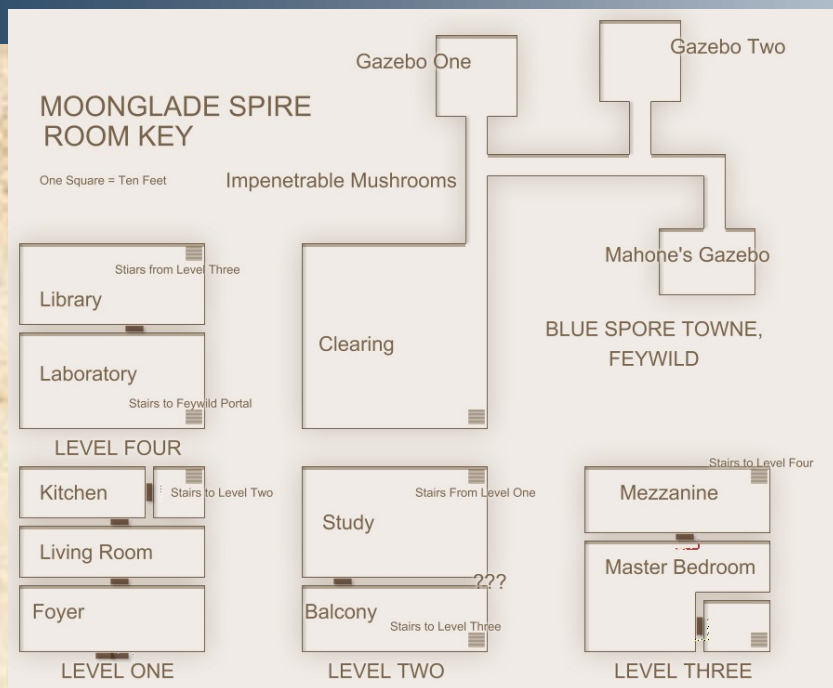
### **Study**

In what was once a cozy and comfortable study, now lie rotted, moth-eaten couches. There is another magical painting, the loop of animation it displays shows the redheaded woman from the first magic painting having a dream of another land. A whole flock of blue butterflies like the one that flew through the kitchen fly through a grove of giant blue mushrooms. The image zooms out to show that the land lies through a shimmering portal in the sky. This gateway seems to be 50 feet above the spot where Moonglade Spire now stands.

There is also a music stand with a copy of a piece of music called "A Night With The Fey King" and a Wand of Conducting.

Each magic painting is worth 200gp if the PCs can cart it out of the tower. They have heavy frames and are 4 feet by 3 feet. At some point, a Baklunish rug and two wall-mounted swords will attack the players.





the party! Too bad Mahone's gonna kill you before it starts! Hahahaha!"

### Encounter Five

#### **8 Boggles**

AC 14; HP 18; AT +1, DMG 1d6-1 ; XP 25; Oil Puddle – Sticky 11 DC Dex check or restrained, Slippery 11 DC Dex check or fall prone; Rift transports them 30 feet away, they can attack through it. Climb 30 feet

#### **Master Bedroom**

The Boggles flee to the Master Bedroom and then out to the Library. In the Master Bedroom is an old king size Canopy Bed, with a walk-in closet featuring Clothes of Mending and a Cloak of Many Fashions.

There is another Magical Painting on the Wall. This once again shows the redhead in her bed, dreaming of a beautiful elven man in a red cap kissing her in a field of blue mushrooms surrounded by Giant Butterflies.

Stairs going up lead to Level Four

### Level Four

#### **Library**

A great library is here. Most of the books have decayed or been eaten by bookworms, but 6 volumes of stories about people traveling to the Feywild are salvageable. They are worth 10gp each to a book dealer. The common themes of the stories are time working differently in the Feywild and magical effects seeping out of any portal to our world. The decayed skeletons of two teenagers lay dead in the corner of the room. This is the sad final fate of Brod's old friends Mack and Myllis. When the PCs examine the books, the large oak table in the center of the room will attack them.

### Encounter Six

#### **Animated Table**

AC 15; HP 39; AT 6; DMG 2d8+4 , with 20 feet head start; + 2d8 and prone if a DC 15 Dex check is failed. Dispel Magic will render helpless for 1 min; XP 450

#### **Return of 3 Boggles**

AC 14; HP 18; AT +1, DMG 1d6-1 ; XP 25; Oil Puddle – Sticky 11 DC Dex check or restrained, Slippery 11 DC Dex check or fall prone; Rift transports them 30 feet away, they can attack through it. Climb 30 feet.

During the fight, 3 Boggles reappear and mess with the players with their oils. In Sylvan they will taunt the players, "How can you fight Mahone if you can't even fight a table!" They will paintball them too.

There is a Chest in the corner, with the heraldry of the

### Encounter Four

#### **Animated Rug**

AC 12; HP 33; AT +5, target grappled, DC 13 escape, DMG 2d6+3 each turn until escape; Attacks do 1/2 DMG to victim, 1/2 to rug XP 450

#### **2 Animated Swords**

AC 17; HP 17; AT +3 DMG 1d8+1; XP 50

Both go dormant for one minute from dispel magic

#### **Balcony**

Stairs up from the Study lead to a Balcony overlooking Moonglade. The balcony seems to grow out of the magical oak of the tower, like some kind of branch. Two more Giant Butterflies flit about.

Stairs going up lead to:

### Level Three

#### **Mezzanine**

A room for small receptions and social gatherings lies at the top of the stairs. There is an ancient bar with 2 old bottles of wine, worth 50gp each. There is also a Tankard of Sobriety here. 8 Boggles hide behind the door of the Master Bedroom. If the PCs walk from the Mezzanine to the Master Bedroom, a few of the Boggles appear from a Dimensional Rift. They cover the ground near the players in Sticky Oil. They then jump through the rift thirty feet ahead to the Master Bedroom, and sling paint-balls made of sheepskin at the Characters, covering them in a sticky blue paint. In Sylvan they say, "Now you're dressed for



Great Kingdom in an elaborate bronze plate on the top. On the chest is a *Glyph of Warding. Magic Missile*, cast at third level, will fire into the character for 3d4+3 DMG if appropriate precautions are not taken.

Inside is a small box, the same one in the painting of the graduation ceremony. Inside that is a *Pearl of Power*. It will give an attuned spell-caster back one spell slot per day of up to 3rd level. It is also sentient, explaining to the PCs that it is one of 13 *Pearls of Power*, given to the graduating class of the University of Rauxes in the year 248. Its mission is to further the glory of the Great Kingdom. It asks how things are, and is horribly depressed to learn that the kingdom has fallen. He asks where Faedra is and is even more depressed to learn that she has disappeared.

### Laboratory

Among various discarded censers and beakers is a half-obscured scroll of a spell that grows wood into a building. The scroll is damaged and unusable, but would fetch 35gp from a Wizard.

There is another Magical Painting. Once again, Faedra dreams of kissing the Elf in the Red hat. He beckons from the gate above Moonglade. We then see her growing Moonglade Spire from wood to reach the portal. There is a spiral staircase going up from the room. Giant Butterflies fly around the stairs.

## Level Five

The stairs seem to go on and on and on, stretching impossibly out for at least five minutes as they spiral up and up through the tower. Vines like those outside the tower appear on the walls. Soon the whole wall is covered in strange vines, and tiny blue mushrooms start to grow on all surfaces. The giant butterflies are thick in the air now.

Soon the stairs stop and the PCs find themselves in a vine-covered Tunnel. A strange feeling of euphoria and anxiety passes through them. They have crossed into the Feywild.

### Tunnel

The vine-covered Tunnel is round and big enough for human-sized PCs to walk in if they stoop. There is a giant **Mushroom** in their way. If they touch it, it shrieks.

### Shrieker

AC 5; HP 13; XP 10; Makes a shrieking noise.

## The Feywild

### Blue-spore Towne Clearing

When the PCs emerge from the Tunnel, they find themselves in a clearing surrounded by giant blue

mushrooms as big as trees. Vines cover the ground. Misshapen pumpkins grow everywhere. There is a narrow path through the clearing 100 feet ahead of them, that appears to be paved with purple stones.

They will soon be attacked by 2 Quicklings and however many Boggles are left. When there are only two Boggles left, they will flee. "Not fair! I'm telling Mahone!" they will yell in Sylvan. The Quicklings simply attack the PCs and steal their things, giggling all the way. One Quickling will grab a thing of value on its turn, starting with magic items, then weapons, then treasure and then sprint off into the woods and hide it. Unless they are stopped, they take everything of value from the party and hide it in the forest forever. Once the Quicklings are defeated, PCs can track their equipment with DC 12 checks in appropriate skills or Abilities. They will fight to defend themselves.

## Encounter Seven

### 2 Quicklings

AC 16; HP 10; 3 AT +8 To Hit; DMG 1d4+6; XP 200; Spells; Disadvantage on all Attack rolls unless incapacitated; Slight of Hand + 8, Acrobatics + 8; Speed 120

### 3 Boggles

AC 14; HP 18; AT +1, DMG 1d6-1 ; XP 25; Oil Puddle – Sticky 11 DC Dex check or restrained, Slippery 11 DC Dex check or fall prone; Rift transports them 30 feet away, they can attack through it. Climb 30 feet

### Gazebo One

The purple stones lead to a tiny Gazebo, where a Sprite lives. The Sprite's name is Brigid. She greets the players in Sylvan and asks if they are friends of Faedra. To the denizens of the Feywild, Faedra only arrived a year ago.

Her story is sad, and just one more example of the evil of Mahone. Mahone is a Redcap, who was born when an elf was murdered by a human settler of Moonglade. Now he lures humans to their deaths through the portal, and spreads the curse of the vines and pumpkins to blight their lands.

Mahone appeared to Faedra in her dreams as a handsome elf, as portrayed in the magical paintings she created. Infatuated, she built Moonglade Spire to join her love in the Feywild, discovering the truth too late Faedra was the latest victim of his dream magic. Now she is asleep, her blood drained to keep Mahone alive. The Curse comes from a magic pumpkin Mahone grew. It must be destroyed to cure the land of Moonglade and close the gate. Brigid vows to lead the PCs to where Mahone is keeping Faedra.

### Brigid

AC 15; HP 4; AT Shortbow +6 to hit; DMG 1; DC 10 Save or fall Asleep; Invisible at will.



## Gazebo Two

If the PCs follow Brigid through the woods, they will reach another, large gazebo, with a fireplace, where three Satyrs pull on a jug of wine and smoke pungent herbs. Faedra's body lies in the gazebo, unconscious, with her blood being drained by a series of tubes into a carved wooden jug.

One Satyr has pipes and will use them to put the PCs to sleep. If that doesn't work, he will try to frighten them. The other two will attack. If any die, the third runs off to warn Mahone. The Satyrs are intoxicated enough to be susceptible to trickery if the PCs have a decent plan and roll well on their skill/ability checks.

## 3 Satyrs

AC 14; HP 31; AT +5 to hit, DMG 1d6+3 Short-sword/Short-bow; XP 100

Spells – Pipes – Charm/Fear/Lullaby DC 13 Wisdom Check.

Faedra comes to, but she is in a weakened and vulnerable state. She can't believe what she's done and cries. She was so sure the Feywild would be wonderful and Mahone played on her just-out-of-college naivete. She needs to rest and Brigid vows to get her to safety.

Faedra is a level 3 Wizard and appears to be 25 years old. If necessary, Brigid can hide the PCs long enough to take a Long Rest.

## Mahone's Gazebo

Mahone is a horrible Redcap who sits in a hammock, eating wild boar from plates that are brought to him by the last 2 Boggles if the players have not killed them all by now. He has a large gazebo with a fire-pit, a bar, and a chest of his belongings. The vines that have saturated Moonglade emanate from a nasty misshapen pumpkin that sits in his gazebo. One can see vines sprouting from the pumpkin that disappear into small portals located in the air around the pumpkin, where they stretch out over Moonglade, infecting the land with mutation. If the PCs destroy it, the portal to the Feywild will close and they will be sucked back to Oerth.

Mahone tells the players that he needs blood to soak his magical hat every three days, so if they have taken his blood supply, theirs will have to do. With that, he and the Boggles attack!

## Encounter Eight

### Redcap

AC 13; HP 45; AT 3 To hit +6 Sickle; DMG 2d4 + 4, OR 1 attack in which he runs up to a PC and attacks with his iron boots, DC 14 Dex check or take 3d10 + 4; XP 700

### 2 Boggles

AC 14; HP 18; AT +1; DMG 1d6-1; XP 25; Oil Puddle – Sticky 11 DC Dex check or restrained; Slippery 11 DC Dex check or fall prone. Rift transports them 30 feet away, they can attack through it. Climb 30 feet.

The Redcap has a treasure horde which includes a bagpipe of elven design worth 35GP, six 10GP gems, 85SP, and a Dark Shard Amulet, which allows warlocks to cast a cantrip they don't know once per day on a DC 10 Intcheck.

**Total XP for the Adventure is 4320**, or 1080 per Character in party of four.

When the players destroy the pumpkin, they blink back into the now-empty fourth floor of Moonglade Spire, along with Faedra. Upon exiting the Tower, they find that the countryside of Moonglade has gone back to normal. No more tangling vines. No more misshapen pumpkins. When they leave the tower they find a crowd of peasants, including Brod and his family and any of the Moonglade Militia that are still alive cheering as they exit the tower. They have lifted the curse and now the villagers can farm on the land that was once blighted. Faedra is in a daze and will accompany the PCs to the Boarding Barn. She wishes to never see Moonglade Spire again, and will load a wagon with her remaining possessions and set out for the Great Kingdom to see what may be done about her former home. She is grateful to the PCs for saving her life, and only asks for items with sentimental value to be returned such as her clothing and personal effects from her time at the University. She would like the Pearl of Power back but she doesn't want any of the household magic items as they only serve to remind her of her time under Mahone's spell.

Upon the Characters' return to Cardyn's Cove, Segrius will listen in amazement to their tale. He will offer to purchase any magic items they don't want at Dungeon Master's Guide rates. He will then give the PCs a Wizard's Writ, and tell them that the Bazaar for the first time will be open to wizards from allied nations like Veluna, Greyhawk, Dyvers, Verbobonc, Celene, and Highfolk. He gives them the location, a Fairgrounds created by magic just outside of the town of Pantarn. The Bazaar will certainly draw a Wizard who can cast Anti-Magic Shell and the PCs can learn what lies in Zoreg's box.

## New Magic Item

### Moving Painting (minor, common)

This magical painting records an animated scene that plays on a ten second to two minute loop like an Instagram video. The scene plays in perpetuity unless the painting is somehow destroyed



# THE UNDEAD HUNTER

## Spice Up Your Old School Paladins

By Jay L. "Lord Gosumba" Scott - [the LordGosumba Channel on Twitch](#)

Those who remember *Good Got You Down? Try this for Evil!* from Dragon #39 about the NPC anti-paladin, and *A Plethora of Paladins* from Dragon #106 may recall the desire, back during the early evolution of D&D, to expand upon the paladin character class. These were both very nicely written examples. In my campaign, I have done the same, but in a slightly different direction. The Undead Hunter is one example of a customized subclass that exists in my World of Greyhawk setting.

Some readers may also recall the conversion of the paladin class to a subclass of cavalier (instead of fighter) as written in the Dragon #72 article *The Chivalrous Cavalier*, and in the 1983 *Unearthed Arcana*. This presented a true dilemma for my players and I, since paladins appeared to lose their true charm with this change to a frontal-assault, stand-and-deliver class in the manner of the cavalier. After a few years of playtesting the new paladin and making some tweaks to the cavalier class itself (I decided to utilize the Dragon #72 version with minor changes over the *Unearthed Arcana* version), I made the decision to allow both paladin classes (subclass of fighter as well as the cavalier) to exist in my campaign. This could easily be attributed to the character's family history, social status background, or availability of specific mentors or trainers in the area.

Another paladin subclass, the Inquisitor, was featured in the wonderful computer game from the 1990s: *Baldur's Gate 2*. I plan to share my version of it in a future article. With this campaign background, please note that the Undead Hunter and the Inquisitor are both subclasses of the paladin from the original PHB 1E. The Undead Hunter may be utilized as either a PC class or NPC-only character class. Please feel free to playtest the information listed and make any changes you wish to suit your play style and campaign setting.



In the World of Greyhawk setting, Undead are prevalent and growing in power throughout certain lands, particularly the Great Kingdom. Add vile mega-undead villains like

Vecna, Azalin, Acererak, and Saint Kargoth the Betrayer (not to mention other Death Knights), and the Undead Hunter might be a thematic fit for your campaign. The class requirements and abilities are given in 1e and 2e format, but they may be easily adapted to any specific rule set.

### Order of Ulek Campaign PCs

#### **Samanda Crakesbone** (LG, H F, Undead Hunter 8)

Samanda is the bastard daughter of Karelia Crakesbone, Commanding Officer of the Order of Ulek in Greyhawk City, and the Fallen paladin, Emerson Winchester III. Samanda was born in the Free City of Greyhawk, but was raised for a majority of her formative years in the Free City of Altimira.

She was educated by the Order of Ulek, and very early in her life determined that she would like to follow in her mother's footsteps. However, Samanda wanted to become a weapon beyond simply fighting evil; she had an intense aversion toward undead, and believed she would be an invaluable asset in eradicating these foul creatures. She was sworn into the Order of Ulek as its 194<sup>th</sup> member. Her favored weapon is her +3 Falchion, Frost Brand.

Standing 5' 7" tall with long auburn hair, Samanda has spurned the attention of multiple suitors. Recently, she has found happiness with a childhood friend, Jake Winchester (LG, H M, Archer 9, Order of Ulek Knight), third child of the Mayor of Altimira, Sherice, and Elijah Winchester III. They joyfully announced their engagement at Vinyamar Gardens, one of the most opulent establishments in Altimira. Samanda truly loves her mother Karelia, but she resents growing up without a father figure. This is something she has sworn vehemently not to visit upon children she may have.

#### **Liesl Abdallus** (LG, H (1/2Eh traits) F, Undead Hunter 6)

Liesl is the second of three children of Lady Victoria Abdallus of Waybury in the Duchy of Ulek, and Herbie the White, paladin (cavalier) and long-standing Knight of Ulek. Of the three children (older brother Hessler and younger sister Heidi), Liesl shows the most Elven traits because her mother is half-elven and a paladin (cavalier) Champion Defender of the Duchy of Ulek. Liesl's early childhood was spent at Herbie's keep, the White Tower in the Principality of Ulek, but she later lived in the Free City of Altimira where she received her education.

Not wanting to become a cavalier like her parents, Liesl wanted instead to strive toward destroying something that haunted her as a child - the undead. Having witnessed some townsfolk being drained of life by what appeared to be their own "shadows", Liesl became an Undead Hunter. She was recently initiated into the Order of Ulek as an Apprentice and is its 204<sup>th</sup> member. Her favored weapon is her +2 keen<sup>1</sup> footman's mace.

Art by William Dvorak



Standing a tall 5' 10", Liesl is a very no-nonsense warrior and the dourest of her siblings.

## **The Undead Hunter**

Subclass of paladin (fighter subclass from 1e PHB, not 1e UA cavalier)

### **Minimum Statistics:**

**Spell-Like Abilities:** (each usable 1x per day unless stated otherwise)

- 1<sup>st</sup>:** Invisibility to Undead (PHB 3e, p.218)
- 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Sunscorch (PO, p.163)
- 3<sup>rd</sup>:** Hold Undead (PH2, p.150)
- 4<sup>th</sup>:** Free Action, (PHB 2e, p.217)
- 5<sup>th</sup>:** Sunrise (FA, p.92) **or** Searing Light (PHB 3e, p.248)
- 6<sup>th</sup>:** Cloak of Bravery (UA, p.37) **or** Negative Plane Protection (UA, p.36)
- 7<sup>th</sup>:** Protection from Undead, 10' radius (PHB 1e, p.49) instead of Protection from Evil
- 8<sup>th</sup>:** Sol's Searing Orb (TM, p.104), 1x per week
- 9<sup>th</sup>:** False Dawn (FA, p. 93), 1x per week

Strength: 12, Wisdom: 16, Charisma: 17

**Race:** Human (at the DM's discretion, other races may be included)

Progress on the same experience table as paladin, but at -10% of paladin experience table; if Strength and Wisdom are both 16 or better, progress using normal experience table with +0% to earned experience.

**Allowable Alignments:** LG, NG, CG, LN (multiple alignment choices reflect background ethos differences when dealing with others in regard to the cause of slaying undead)

Undead Hunters use the fighter table for attacks and saving throws (+2 for all saves, as a paladin)

**Hit Points:** d10 per level (as paladin)

**Initial Weapon Proficiencies:** 3

**Required Proficiency:** Crossbow (light or heavy)

**Specialization Slots:** 2 (+1 hit, +2 damage, does not increase melee or missile attack rate; only 1 may be used at 1<sup>st</sup> Level)

**Melee Attack Rate:** 7<sup>th</sup> Level: 3/2 13<sup>th</sup> Level: 2/1

**Weaponry:** All

**Armor/Shield:** All

## **Special ability changes from standard Paladin:**

**Innate:** Protection from Undead (personal) & Detect Undead 60' (instead of Evil)

**Retains:** Lay on Hands (2 Hit Points /Level, 1x Day)

**Retains:** Turn Undead at their level -2, as paladin

**Retains:** Immunity to Disease and Curing Diseases; however, disease must be initially caused by undead

**Loses:** General clerical spell casting; however, specific spell-like abilities gained (see table below)

### **When Fighting Undead:**

**Undead Hunter gains:** multiple attacks with specialized melee weapons (1<sup>st</sup> Level: 3/2; 7<sup>th</sup> Level: 2/1)

Undead Hunter gains: *keen*<sup>1</sup> weapon with crossbows (critical hits on 19/20)

Smite Undead: +1 damage/level damage, first attack, and usable 3x day

Gains: complete immunity to level/stat draining by undead upon reaching 9<sup>th</sup> level

UA: Unearthed Arcana 1st Ed.

PO: Player's Option: Spells & Magic

TM: Tome of Magic

FA: Faiths & Avatars (yes I will take from FR for great spells and ideas!)

**Special Note:** Intelligent undead will be able to sense an Undead Hunter's presence and likely will concentrate upon their complete destruction above other party members, if possible. The Undead Hunter may be both a tremendous boon, and a huge burden to an adventuring party due to the attention they will garner from the non-living!

1 - "Keen" is a weapon enchantment adapted from 3rd edition D&D, and is used in the author's campaign for all weapon types, not just slashing.

Adventures regarding the Order of Ulek campaign; its allies, mercenary groups, and enemies, may be seen on [www.twitch.tv/lordgosumba](http://www.twitch.tv/lordgosumba).



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